Boricuas repudian militarización e intervencionismo gringo

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A mile from George Floyd Square

Trump's ICE thugs execute a legal observer

By Sharon Black

Less than a mile from where Minneapolis police lynched George Floyd in 2020, the U.S. government has claimed another life in the same streets. On a quiet residential block, in the middle of protests against Donald Trump's expanding immigration dragnet, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent shot 37-year-old legal observer Renee Nicole Good in the head as she sat behind the wheel.

Good was not a "suspect" in any crime. She was a legal observer who chose to stand with her neighbors and document federal agents terrorizing the community. Her car was blocking the street only because armed ICE and other federal agents had turned that neighborhood into a militarized zone, just as they have in cities across the country under Trump's raids.

When she tried to leave, enraged agents moved on her vehicle. One stepped forward, raised his gun, and fired into her head. Bystander video shows no weapon, no visible threat —

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New Orleans protest, La. mothers organize daily ICE watch

ICE shooting in Glen Burnie, Md.

The K-shaped economy

The dollar's weakness

Burkina Faso: coup defeated

Gaza's 'ceasefire' exposed

Mardi Gras march for **Palestine**

Trump/CIA war against **Russia**

$11 billion for **Taiwan** war

Trump war threat against **Iran**

Who are Nicolás Maduro & Cilia Flores –

'First Revolutionary Combatant,' Cilia Flores and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro raise their fists together at a public event in Caracas. Flores and Maduro were seized during the U.S. invasion of Venezuela on Jan. 3, 2026.

and why Washington kidnapped them

On Jan. 3, 2026, the Trump administration carried out one of the most brazen acts of imperialist aggression seen in Latin America in decades. U.S. forces invaded Venezuela and seized its elected president, Nicolás Maduro, along with Cilia Flores.

By Gary Wilson

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HANDS OFF VENEZUELA

Los Angeles activists condemn U.S. attack

From Attica to Rikers to Brooklyn, NY: death behind bars

U.S. uses military force to seize oil

Oil wealth, class power, and imperialist siege

'Donroe Doctrine': When sanctions fail, U.S. imperialism wages war

SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

Protesters march through downtown New Orleans, briefly shutting down blocks of Canal Street near Bourbon Street.

New Orleans protest denounces ICE and National Guard occupation

By Gregory E. Williams

New Orleans, Jan. 2 – In downtown, dozens marched against Trump's National Guard and ICE occupation. The action started with a rally in front of Armstrong Park. The march went through busy parts of the French Quarter and Central Business District, briefly shutting down several blocks of Canal Street.

Unlike Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry – who asks "how high?" before Trump even says jump – these protesters are not happy with the federal government rampaging through our communities with armed agents.

This is happening as violent crime in the city continues to drop: 2025 saw one of the lowest violent crime rates since the 1960s. And other crimes like burglary were down 50%. The National Guard is not here because of an out-of-control crime situation. Trump has sent them as a threat to the people. He has never made it a secret that he wants mass repression against anyone resisting his rule.

And they are here to protect ICE, which is clearly not going after violent criminals, either. Independent analyses have found that only 5% of the people ICE is kidnapping had a violent crime conviction. Seventy-three percent had no criminal conviction whatsoever. They are arresting parents bringing their kids to school and our neighbors who work hard for low wages, just hoping for a better life for their families. This is not about keeping anyone safe. It is about dividing and repressing working-class people.

And none of this is making grocery prices lower, by the way. Tech billionaires and private prison owners with ICE contracts laugh all the way to the bank when we fall for the lies and believe that our immigrant neighbors are the ones somehow keeping us down. But anything to keep us from looking at what said billionaires are doing.

At the rally before the march, Toni with Freedom Road Socialist Organization drew a connection between the occupation of majority-Black New Orleans and the violence committed by the declining U.S. empire abroad. She began with the chant, "No boots on the ground, no bombs in the air, U.S. out of everywhere!," then continued:

"That includes Palestine, that includes Africa, that includes Asia, that includes New Orleans, because we don't need military occupation. The white supremacist militarism that says that they can take their guns, bombs, and tanks, and GIs, and just send them all over this world and use them against the masses of the people – because they think they have divine right – that's over.

"That time of empire and white supremacy is over. Now is the time of the people. Now is the time for us to take a stand.

"They like to say that us Brown people and people from oppressed nations in this country are a minority, to be subjugated to the rules of their racist minoritarian rule. But in New Orleans we are not a minority. Black people, Brown people – we are the majority in this city!

"And in our movement, we take from the tradition of Malcolm X, who also fought for Black self determination. Brown people, Black people, we are not minorities. We are the majority of this world! We are the majority of this city! And we are not going to sit idly by while some few people want to pillage our city, pillage our nations for the benefit of the billionaires. That's why we're standing up and fighting back."

This protest was endorsed by Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Queer and Trans Community Action Project, Communist Party USA, Workers Voice Socialist Movement and other organizations. #

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Louisiana mothers organize daily ICE watch

By Gregory E. Williams

On New Year's Day, I spent the afternoon with activists watching for ICE in Slidell, a small Louisiana town about 40 miles northeast of New Orleans. We sat in parked vehicles outside a Latine grocery store in the middle of a strip mall.

The scene today was totally ordinary, if a bit slow; people came and got their groceries without incident. But this location has been heavily targeted by ICE, with multiple incidents documented on social media. In response, several youth-led protests have happened next to the highway here, and ICE watch has posted up daily. The community in Slidell has gotten organized.

Kayla, a Slidell native and mom, told me: "They thought these small towns were just going to roll over, but we're not. The kids were out here for three days protesting. They had a protest here yesterday but I couldn't make it because I was doing ICE watch somewhere else."

I asked her how often she's out doing this. "Every day. I'm living in this car," she laughed.

With the car seat and other signs of child passengers, her SUV looked like any other busy mom's, except this vehicle was packed with boxes of whistle kits and food to distribute. The whistles are for making noise when ICE shows up.

"They want people to be afraid to even go to the grocery store, so we've been doing food distributions. Some small stores are locking their doors until people come up.

"ICE is targeting construction sites, neighborhoods, and trailer parks. Things are so bad that notaries are going to people's houses to help parents give over guardianship of their children in case the parents are taken."

Kayla said she had never been involved in activism before Trump returned to office in January 2025. I asked her if she ever imagined she would be doing something like this. She said:

"Absolutely not. I never saw myself doing something like this. I was not an activist. I went from being scared just to go to a protest to confronting ICE. I'm not very political but this is just wrong."

Jennifer, another Slidell activist doing ICE watch, said: "They're changing their tactics, just driving around in single vehicles, looking less conspicuous. I feel like I'm chasing ghosts. Now they're mainly getting people during traffic stops. The police departments are working with ICE. State police are doing checks, supposedly to check inspection stickers, but they're really looking for immigrants."

Despite the challenges, these activists aren't giving up. They adapt. For example, Kayla said: "We've started school watches too, just in case ICE tries to snatch people up while they're dropping off their kids."

In Slidell, they've learned from ICE watch in other states. These networks across the country are increasingly linked up. Kayla explained:

"We're 3-D printing whistles here, but some have also been donated by folks in Chicago, North Carolina, and California.

"It's just amazing how many good people there are in the world. People we don't even know are just giving us money to put these whistle kits and food packages together. There are so many people right here in our community. Yeah, there are some MAGA types who come out to troll us. But overall we're getting a lot of support. There's this one local guy – I didn't know him at all – and he just gave me money to get the supplies. He just trusted me.

"But there's still a lot of education that needs to be done. You know, a lot of people think undocumented immigrants are getting all this free stuff and taking advantage of the system. It's not true. They think they're getting Medicaid and all this stuff, but they're not. They are paying taxes, though. Immigrants are making a big contribution to the economy and then they're treated like garbage.

Despite the terror being sown in our communities here in South Louisiana, Kayla is optimistic. "A lot of what we have to do is just documenting and exposing them. That really does have an effect. It makes it more difficult for them to operate. And the community learns about their tactics and all the harm they're doing to people and families, including children. We have to keep going."

What Kayla describes as "documenting and exposing" ICE is not an appeal for transparency or reform — it's tactical intelligence gathering for community defense. The daily ICE watch, the whistle networks, the food distributions that keep people from having to risk the grocery store — these aren't symbolic gestures. They are concrete obstructions to the deportation machinery.

The activists' presence has already forced ICE to change tactics, switching from conspicuous vans to single vehicles, making their operations slower and more difficult. When community members receive warnings, they avoid capture.

When mutual aid networks provide food, people don't have to expose themselves at targeted stores. The strategy isn't to make ICE operate better or more humanely — it's to make ICE operations harder to carry out at all. This is working-class people in Slidell building the power to materially impede state terror in their community, one day of organized resistance at a time.

Names have been changed to protect the activists' identities.

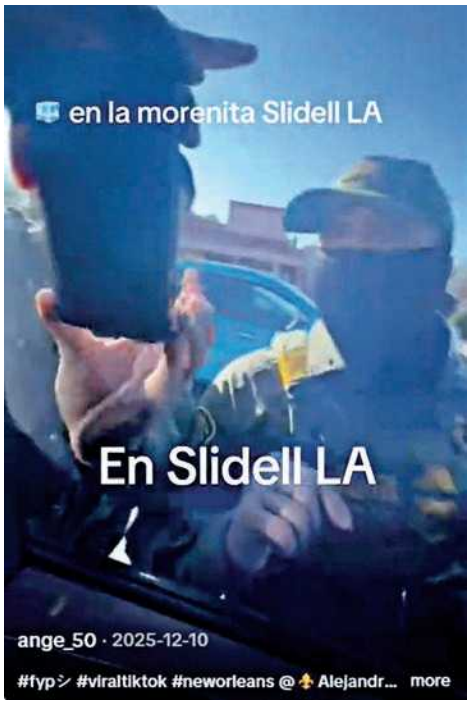

Photo: ange_50/TikTok

Slidell, Louisiana, Dec. 10 – Masked ICE agents film an activist conducting ICE watch from a parked vehicle outside La Morenita grocery store.

Minneapolis

Continued from page 1

only the cold efficiency of an execution carried out in broad daylight.

The 'garbage' narrative of the state

Trump's administration rushed out a familiar script: the ICE agent was "in fear for his life," the car was a "weapon," and killing Renee Good was "necessary." Trump himself publicly defended the shooting, doubling down on a lie that depends on people distrusting their own eyes more than the word of a racist, law-and-order regime.

But the people of Minneapolis know this playbook. The same state that told the world George Floyd "resisted arrest" now expects working-class communities to believe that an unarmed woman behind a windshield had to die for an agent to go home safe. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey called the federal story a "garbage narrative," and Police Chief Brian O'Hara has admitted there is no evidence that Good was even the target of any investigation.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz revealed that Good was killed in front of a family member and then urged the community to "remain calm." Calm — for whom? For a system that sends masked agents into neighborhoods and

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ICE shooting of unarmed man sparks people's movement in Maryland

By Andrew Matatag

On Christmas Eve day in Glen Burnie, Maryland, ICE officers shot an unarmed man who was driving a van, causing him to smash into a tree.

The story the Anne Arundel Police Department tells is that Tiago Alexandre Sousa-Martins, a migrant from Portugal, tried to run down the officers with the van. Salomon Antonio Serrano-Esquival, a migrant from El Salvador, was a passenger in the van and suffered injuries as a result of the crash.

SLL photo

A People's Power Assembly picket line denounces ICE violence following the shooting of an unarmed man in Glen Burnie, Maryland.

ICE's official statement was its usual fascist rhetoric, run-on sentences and all:

"This incident, which is still under investigation, comes as the extremist anti-ICE rhetoric and outright lies of politicians, the news media, activists, and violent agitators continue to fuel a more than 1,150% increase in assaults against ICE officers. Our brave officers are risking their lives every day to keep American communities safe by arresting and removing illegal aliens from our streets. Continued efforts to encourage illegal aliens and violent agitators to actively resist ICE will only lead to more violent incidents, the extremist rhetoric must stop."

However, witness accounts reported by local media contradict ICE's characterization of a high-threat situation. According to the Baltimore Banner and other outlets, ICE agents followed Sousa-Martins from a nearby Walmart before confronting him in a parking lot where witnesses said he was playing a game on his phone. One neighbor who saw the shooting told reporters that Sousa-Martins was shot three times. The confrontation occurred in a residential neighborhood on Christmas Eve morning, with witnesses expressing shock at the level of force used in a populated area.

Baltimore's People's Power Assembly responded with a rally and press conference the following Monday, Dec. 29. The media advisory issued to local press strongly condemned ICE's brutal shooting and raised demands:

"It is time for the Maryland Governor's office and the Maryland General Assembly to act. Both institutions have the power to ban cooperation agreements between Maryland counties and ICE, like the joint ICE-Anne Arundel County police 'Criminal Alien Program.' Further, the State of Maryland should declare all 287(G) agreements between ICE and Maryland counties to be defunct as they violate the basic constitutional and human rights of Maryland citizens."

Adrian, a representative of Malaya Movement Baltimore, an organization also participating in the Tanggol Migrante (Defend Migrants) Movement, was invited to speak about how Trump's immigration policy affects the Filipino community. "ICE is a clear and present danger in our communities," said the representative. "They violate our rights, terrorize people based on their skin color, and once they detain us, subject us to inhumane living conditions."

"In line with Trump's fascist immigration policy," he continued, "the Customs and Border Protection have also struck fear into the hearts of Filipino cruise workers docking at the Maryland Cruise Terminal. Since September, CBP agents have unjustly targeted Filipinos and detained them over crimes they did not commit."

Members of the International League of People's Struggles (ILPS) Baltimore-DMV regional chapter, the Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America, the Free State Coalition, and the Baltimore Party for Socialism and Liberation were also in attendance to support.

The crowd drew overwhelming support from passing cars and passersby.

All in attendance committed to building a fighting mass movement that can bring down not only ICE, but the whole system that makes ICE both possible and profitable. #

Minneapolis ICE execution

Continued from page 3

then blames the people when they refuse to accept another state killing?

The shooting took place in the district of Representative Ilhan Omar, a Black Muslim woman and frequent target of Trump's racist attacks. Omar called the killing exactly what it is: "state violence." That phrase matters. This was not a "tragic misunderstanding" or the act of one "bad apple." It is the direct product of a racist, anti-immigrant offensive from the top of the U.S. state.

Trump's mass deportation campaign, like the police occupation of Black neighborhoods, is a weapon of class rule. It is designed to terrorize migrants and communities of color, to keep workers divided and fearful, and to normalize the use of military-style force on U.S. streets. ICE raids, Border Patrol tactical teams in cities, and local police SWAT units all blend into one repressive apparatus whose real target is the working class — especially Black, Latine, Arab, Muslim, and other oppressed communities.

When Trump and his officials defend an ICE execution and call it "law and order," they are sending a message to every cop, every ICE agent, every border guard: You will be protected when you pull the trigger. That is how fascist forces inside the state are encouraged and emboldened.

From Minneapolis to the world: the same struggle

The people of Minneapolis have already shown the world how to fight back. In 2020, a multinational, working-class uprising against the police murder of George Floyd exposed the violence at the core of the U.S. system. The killing of Renee Nicole Good is not a break from that history but a continuation of it. The same state that arms ICE to terrorize neighborhoods and execute observers enforces borders, wages deportation wars, and sends the Pentagon across the globe to secure profits for billionaires and bankers. This is one system, one war on the working class — and it can only be confronted through unified working-class resistance. #

The K-shaped economy is monopoly capitalism working as designed

By Gary Wilson

What is being called a "K-shaped economy" is not a temporary distortion or the result of recent shocks, but the normal outcome of monopoly capitalism.

The image suggests two trajectories diverging from a common point—one arm rising, the other falling. The term has gained traction in economic coverage because it names the visible split between those who own and those who work, but it does not explain the system that produces that divide.

In the third quarter of 2025, the economy grew at an annual rate of 4.3%. Corporate profits rose by $166 billion. Unemployment climbed to 4.6%. Real disposable income for households did not grow at all. These figures do not contradict one another. GDP growth records the expansion of value for capital, not improvements in living conditions. Taken together, the numbers describe an economy organized so that accumulation at the top proceeds even as conditions deteriorate for most working people.

The "K" image captures this split only at the surface. It describes two paths separating from a common starting point, one rising and one falling, without explaining why the split occurs or why it persists.

By framing the outcome as an imbalance or an unusual pattern, the metaphor suggests something temporary or accidental. Under monopoly conditions, however, this gap is neither. It is the routine operation of an economy in which profits are secured not by expanding employment or raising wages, but by cutting jobs, keeping pay flat, and shifting economic risk onto households — a process enforced through labor law, credit systems, and public policy.

This pattern did not emerge suddenly, and it did not begin with the pandemic, inflation, or recent policy shifts. The split now described as "K-shaped" has been widening for decades. What today's figures make visible is the cumulative result of a long shift of income and power away from wages and toward profits. To understand how the economy came to operate this way, it is necessary to look at how income has been divided over the past half-century.

Fifty years of upward transfer

The data on income distribution tells the story plainly. In 1974, the top 20% of households captured 43.5% of total national income. By 2024, their share had grown to 52.2% — a gain of 8.7 percentage points. Every other income group saw its share decline. The bottom 20% fell from 4.3% to 3.1%, a drop of roughly 28% in their portion of national income.

This redistribution reflects monopoly capitalism's inherent drive to concentrate wealth, a tendency that was temporarily constrained from the 1940s through the early 1970s. Strong unions, laws that limited Wall Street speculation and made it harder to move factories overseas, and the political pressures of that period — including the existence of the Soviet Union, socialist China and the anti-colonial national liberation struggles worldwide — extracted real concessions from the ruling class.

Starting in the 1970s, facing overproduction and overaccumulation — more goods produced than could be sold profitably, more capital accumulated than could find profitable investment — the ruling class launched a sustained counteroffensive. Through union-busting, tax cuts for the wealthy, deregulation of finance, and the movement of production to where labor was cheaper and less organized, the ruling class broke that compromise. The widening divide visible in income data since 1974 marks not the beginning of a new trend but the success of that counteroffensive.

One-quarter of all U.S. households now report no job / wage income at all, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. These are not statistical anomalies. They represent millions of people living at the margins or entirely outside formal employment. Monopoly capitalism no longer requires a broad base of stable employment to generate profits. Profits can be sustained through price increases, cost-cutting, and through debt and finance, even as employment becomes more unstable and real wages fall.

Growth Without Jobs

The current expansion makes this visible in sharp terms. The economy grew rapidly in the third quarter, yet hiring stalled and unemployment rose. Real disposable income for households did not increase at all. This is growth detached from work.

Under monopoly conditions, output and revenue increasingly expand without corresponding growth in payrolls. Workers are pushed to do more with less, and hiring is held back even as production increases. What is labeled productivity is often just speed-up — more output demanded from fewer workers who have little power to refuse.

At the same time, consumer spending is being driven not by rising incomes but by basic needs. A significant portion of recent expenditure has gone to health care costs that cannot be deferred. People are spending because they must, not because they can afford to, and they are financing it by drawing down savings or taking on debt. This is survival spending, and it is unsustainable.

Debt as fuel

Younger workers are carrying a particular share of this burden. Gen Z credit card balances have surged by 36 to 37%, while their credit scores have dropped to their lowest levels in years. They are relying on high-interest debt to cover basic costs that wages no longer meet, even though their pay, adjusted for inflation, is nominally higher than previous generations at the same age.

The gap between what workers earn and what they can actually afford reveals how inflation works under monopoly conditions. Prices rise because dominant firms control

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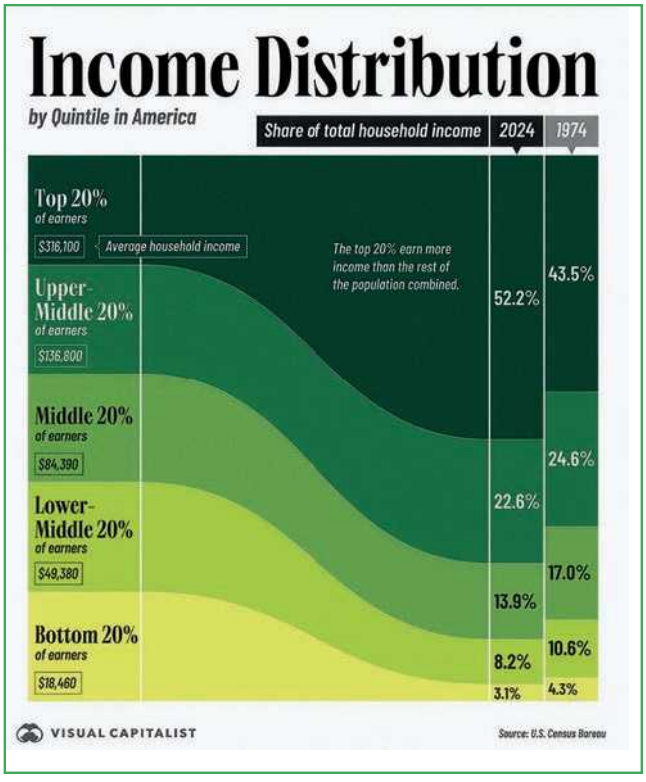

Comrade Lee Patterson ¡Presente!

By Colby Byrd

'We can no longer be in a situation where big business rules over the lives of poor, working and oppressed people.'

– Comrade Lee Patterson

Comrade Lee will forever be a guiding light to me. He was a dedicated veteran member of the Struggle for Socialism Party and People's Power Assembly. Lee was unapologetically Black. Lee told me once that over the course of being involved in the struggle, he has never felt more free to be himself, to be proud of his Blackness and fight for it with all he had than with the Party. The party empowered Lee to use all of his skills in art and design as well as organizing and speaking to contribute to the struggle with all he could. Comrade Lee was unwavering in his support for the global struggle to smash capitalism. He knew that it was and remains capitalism that kills and enslaves the Black community.

Comrade Lee never backed away from a fight. He challenged all klansmen, zionists, sexists, and homophobes. He held the line with his comrades against Venezuelan fascists attempting to take over the revolutionary governmental embassy in DC. He battled white nationalists and Nazis in Charlottesville. He was one of the loudest supporters of Palestinian Resistance to occupation because he knew the struggles of the Black person in America mirror the struggles of the Palestinian in occupied Palestine. A real student of the great Malcolm X, comrade Lee truly understood and lived by the words, "By any means necessary."

In the hospital, Comrade Lee said that he will live to struggle against Trump. I say right now that Comrade Lee will get his wish. He will live on through his words and teachings. He will live on in the hearts and minds of those he called comrade and he will live on through the blood, sweat, and tears shed through continued struggle.

Comrade Lee helped me become a smarter revolutionary and he helped show me the power that exists in Blackness. His energy to never give ground in the fight for all working and oppressed people is an inspiration that keeps me going to fight harder and better my skills everyday.

Rest in Power Comrade Lee, we will carry your spark to help set the system ablaze! #

The K-shaped economy is monopoly capitalism

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supply chains, housing, energy, and food, and use that power to raise prices in order to maintain profit margins, rather than allowing returns to fall.

Under monopoly conditions, inflation becomes a way of transferring income from workers to capital. Dominant firms control supply chains, housing, energy, and food, and use that power to raise prices in order to protect profit margins, even when demand does not justify those increases. Debt then keeps consumption going for a time when wages no longer cover basic costs.

This arrangement is precarious. Gen Z's debt-heavy spending helps keep the economy moving, but only because they still have jobs and can make their payments. When the next downturn comes, those holding the most debt with the least cushion will stop paying first, stop spending, and deepen the collapse. The economy's stability depends on workers who are already drowning.

Profits under a divided economy

Major firms operate within this split and profit from it. Coca-Cola sells lower-cost products to price-constrained buyers while relying on premium brands like Smartwater and Fairlife milk for higher profit margins. Delta reports that revenue growth is driven by first- and business-class tickets, while lower-income passengers are falling behind. Best Buy reports that two-thirds of consumption comes from the top 40% of households.

These practices reflect how profit-making adjusts to a divided economy. Profits are increasingly drawn from high-end consumption on one side and debt-driven spending on the other. The middle, where steady employment once meant steady spending, is shrinking. The wealthiest 10% of Americans own roughly 87% of all stock. When stock prices rise, their wealth increases automatically. The bottom 50% owns just over 1% of the stock market. When prices go up, they just pay more for rent and groceries while owning nothing that increases in value.

Not a recovery, but a structure

What is being described in economic reports as unusual is actually characteristic of monopoly capitalism under conditions where profitable expansion has become difficult. Monopoly firms control enough of their markets to set prices independent of competition.

When profit margins are threatened, prices are raised rather than profits allowed to fall, with state policy tolerating or enforcing that outcome. At the same time, productive capacity expands faster than profitable markets can absorb. The response is not to raise wages or expand employment — that would cut into profits — but to eliminate jobs, automate, and rely on debt to sustain consumption for a time when wages fall short.

This produces the pattern now visible: GDP growth without job creation, corporate profits without rising incomes, spending without security. When you add it all up, the economy can look like it's expanding even as conditions worsen for most people, because the growth shows up in stock prices and corporate earnings rather than in paychecks or jobs.

Calling this a "K-shaped recovery" implies something temporary and self-correcting. In reality, it describes a structure enforced through law and state power. The result is an economy that concentrates wealth at the top while pushing the majority toward more unstable work, lower pay, and rising household debt.

The K shape is not an anomaly. It is a plain description of how monopoly capitalism actually works. #

Lee Patterson five decades in Baltimore's class struggle

By Lev Koufax

Lee Patterson died peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 21, during a short stay in hospice care for complications from renal and heart failure. He was surrounded in his final days by loving comrades and family.

Until his last day, Lee remained a fighter. From his bedside, he recorded a message against Trump's visit to Baltimore, since he wasn't able to attend the protest in person. Patterson had dedicated his life to the struggle for the liberation of the working class and all oppressed people.

Lee was born March 27, 1955, in Baltimore, Maryland. His mother was a domestic worker, and his father a veteran of the Korean War. Over the next 70-plus years of his life, Patterson would give his heart and soul to the struggle for socialism.

After graduating from Northwestern High School in 1973, Lee worked at various jobs, including as a cook at McDonald's. He had a passion for Jimi Hendrix in his early youth and later set up street vending tables to supplement his income.

While working at Eastern Products, a local factory that manufactured Venetian blinds, Lee became involved with the United Furniture Workers Local 75. In 1977, Lee's shop steward approached him and asked Lee to attend a march for civil rights and affirmative action. Lee attended that march and spent the entire afternoon and evening marching through downtown Baltimore.

The revolutionary political struggle and Lee were a perfect match from the beginning. It was during this period that Lee met Vince Copeland, a co-thinker of Sam Marcy, who won Patterson to revolutionary socialism. Copeland was not only a revolutionary thinker but also an organizer, and became active in the union struggle of the workers at Lee's factory, advising young worker activists, of which Lee was one.

As a revolutionary socialist, Patterson became more broadly involved in fighting against all forms of oppression – advocating for the Black community and all oppressed groups. He helped to form the All Peoples Congress in Baltimore, which was founded in Detroit in 1981 to fight the Reagan administration's cuts to social services and jobs.

In his final days, Lee reflected on the different campaigns he participated in during the late 1970s – and through the 1980s – advocating for working-class power and the material needs of oppressed communities. Lee was particularly proud of his work on the campaign demanding rent control for the Black and working-class community and fighting against high utility rates.

About the March on Baltimore City Hall for rent control, Lee said: "I felt more powerful that day than I had ever felt in my whole life." Lee truly loved the working-class struggle. Lee saw the oppression of the working class firsthand in Baltimore's Black community, and it drove him to embrace the struggle for a communist world.

During this period, Lee worked with the Welfare Rights organization, led locally by Rev. Annie Chambers. The group, which also included Sharon Black, Ray Ceci, Andre Powell, Stephen Millies, Jeff Bigelow, Doug Lawson and Bob Cheeks, formed the People's Campaign for Rent Control.

One of Lee's fondest memories was hand-drawing signs for not only the rent control campaign but almost every movement that took place in Baltimore City. "Those signs made me feel like a big human being. I couldn't wait to march downtown with those."

Lee took his advocacy and revolutionary spirit to the airwaves. Rarely a day went by where Lee was not calling into a local talk radio station to challenge homophobia, anti-abortion ministers, and pro-capitalist thought. Lee was incredibly proud to stand in solidarity with women fighting for their basic reproductive rights.

In 2012, after Trayvon Martin's murder, Lee and other Baltimore organizers, including Rev. CD Witherspoon, former president of the Baltimore Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded the Peoples Power Assembly (PPA). Witherspoon became a lifelong friend of Patterson and his family.

Until his death, Lee marched, tabled, and organized fiercely with the PPA on a range of issues from public housing rights to police brutality to "serve the people" initiatives. 2015 saw Baltimore rise up against years of racist apartheid and police terror after the Baltimore police murdered Freddie Gray in northwest Baltimore.

There are a multitude of pictures of marches where Lee can be seen thrusting his fist in the air — pictured prominently in the media as symbols for the rebellion.

However, Lee wasn't just a fighter for the working class at home. He stood in solidarity with the colonized people of the world. This solidarity extended to the people of Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Russia, China, Nicaragua, Palestine, Grenada, Iraq, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Angola, and many others, against imperialist exploitation and war.

Anyone who saw comrade Lee at a protest would immediately notice his myriad of buttons demanding "Disband NATO" and "U.S. out of everywhere." This same sense of solidarity is what drove Lee to join the counter-protest against the Unite the Right nazi march in Charlottesville in 2017.

In 2018, Lee was a founding member of the Struggle for Socialism Party. As a member, Lee continued the fight in the streets for working-class liberation and socialism even as his health began to decline.

Lee Patterson brought much to the working-class struggle. He brought passion, humor, and fire. And he brought his self-taught artistic skills to countless drawings on banners and signs depicting messages of fightback. More than anything, Comrade Lee Patterson will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to fight for the working class at every turn.

Lee Patterson loved the working-class revolution. Lee Patterson loved Black liberation. Lee Patterson loved Jimi Hendrix. Lee Patterson will be carried in memory by his comrades.

Lee is survived by his spouse and companion, Hollee Patterson, two daughters, Valencia Spruell and Safayi Jackson, loving granddaughter Danasia Patterson and other grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother Leonard Patterson and by Terence Lambirth, a loyal and loving friend who acted as brother and his many comrades in the struggle who continue his legacy.

A commemoration of Lee Patterson's life is set for Saturday, Feb. 7, 5 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 1900 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218.

Lee Patterson ¡Presente!

Dollar's weakness is imperialism's

By Gary Wilson

The economic reports arriving in late 2025 point to a system in breakdown. Prices keep rising while jobs disappear. Factories sit idle or close even as corporate profits are maintained and expanded through higher prices and layoffs.

The dollar no longer anchors the world economy but forces other countries to absorb U.S. inflation, interest rate shocks, and financial pressure. These are not separate problems.

What gets called the "decline of the dollar" is not a market mood swing or a technical currency problem at all, but the expression of an imperialist system that can no longer organize production, prices, and employment on a stable basis — or sell what it produces at a profit without war spending, monopoly pricing, and debt.

Production has outrun profitable markets under monopoly capitalism. Productive capacity expands faster than profits can be realized, leaving goods unsold at prices that sustain profit rates.

To compensate, excess capacity piles up and prices are raised to maintain profit growth. Military budgets are expanded to keep factories operational and revenue to continue flowing. But fewer countries are willing or able to finance this system by holding U.S. dollars.

Dominant firms use control over energy, housing, food supply chains, and military contracting to raise prices rather than increase output. The permanent war economy reinforces this dynamic.

A hollowed productive base

After World War II, the United States produced more than half of the world's manufactured goods. Today, its share of global economic output is less than 15%. The industrial base that once supported the dollar's international role has been systematically stripped back through deindustrialization — plant closures, outsourcing, and the diversion of capital away from domestic production.

The results are now visible. U.S. shipyards miss deadlines by years. Weapons systems are produced slowly and in limited quantities even as the United States arms multiple wars at once and prepares for further conflict. Factories cannot meet the demands of Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan, and domestic stockpiles at the same time. The military reach that once reinforced the dollar now exposes its weakness.

Military overstretch and inflation

War spending has never been productive in any social sense, despite the myths used to justify it. It mobilizes labor, materials, and technology to manufacture destruction — goods that do not enter social reproduction or sustain society. Weapons do not feed, house, or transport people; they are built to be destroyed or to destroy.

Military production is insulated from normal price pressure. Long-term government contracts guarantee sales at high prices regardless of efficiency or social need. Costs are passed on to the state, profits are secured in advance, and there is no competitive pressure to expand useful production. Capacity remains narrow, prices stay high, and resources are locked into weapons rather than goods that support everyday life.

In earlier periods, war spending did not generate productive growth so much as enable imperialist expansion — the violent seizure of markets, resources, and labor that temporarily offset capitalism's internal limits. That outlet no longer exists.

Today, military production expands spending while shrinking society's ability to reproduce itself. Money circulates and profits are booked, yet future production is not developed and the goods working people rely on are not produced in greater quantities.

The United States now pours resources into multiple wars and preparations for future ones without stabilizing accumulation or rebuilding industry. While military spending does create jobs, it does so by diverting labor into production that does not expand housing, health care, food, or infrastructure, leaving society poorer in real terms even as payrolls are temporarily sustained.

Sanctions intensify these pressures. They block access to energy, fertilizer, medicine, metals, and food inputs, forcing trade through longer, more expensive routes or cutting it off entirely. Fuel prices rise, transport costs climb, and essential goods arrive late or not at all. These measures are punitive by design. Sanctions are economic warfare, aimed directly at civilian populations, degrading living conditions in order to exert political pressure and reorganizing supply chains around military and geopolitical priorities rather than social benefit.

Tariffs compound the damage by functioning as taxes on imports. Although imposed at the border, their costs are passed through prices and ultimately paid by working people. The result is persistent price increases without an expansion of useful production — higher living costs alongside layoffs, plant closures, and stagnant wages.

Weaponized finance and currency blowback

As U.S. wars, sanctions, and deficits have expanded, holding dollars has become a political risk rather than a neutral financial choice. Dollar reserves are not stacks of cash, but government-owned accounts, bonds, and deposits held inside U.S. and allied financial institutions. Countries that once treated these reserves as a stable store of value have watched them turned into instruments of coercion — frozen, seized, or rendered unusable when political alignment breaks down.

The 2022 seizure of Russian reserves did not come out of nowhere. For decades, the United States had used control over the dollar-based financial system to isolate and punish governments it opposed, freezing state assets and cutting countries off from the international payment networks needed to sell goods, receive revenue, or access foreign currency.

Iranian assets were frozen beginning in 1979 and later paired with exclusion from global banking channels and oil markets. Venezuelan state assets and gold reserves were seized after Washington demanded a regime change. Afghan central bank reserves were frozen overnight in 2021 after the Taliban takeover, triggering economic collapse and creating conditions of mass hunger. In each case, access to reserves depended not on law or contract, but on political compliance with U.S. imperialist authority.

What changed in 2022 was scale. For the first time, these measures were applied to a G20 economy and a major nuclear power. The seizure of Russian reserves made the underlying rule unmistakable: Assets held inside the U.S.-controlled financial system are protected only as long as governments accept Washington's political terms. Economic size offers no immunity. Sovereign reserves function not as neutral safeguards, but as conditional claims that can be revoked when geopolitical lines are crossed.

Central banks across Asia, Africa, and Latin America have sharply increased their gold holdings in recent years. The response has been material, not ideological, because states act on necessity, not belief.

Gold is being accumulated because it cannot be frozen or seized through sanctions, while dollar reserves — electronic balances inside U.S. and allied financial systems — can be blocked with a keystroke.

Gold prices pushing past historic highs reflect this shift: When dollar reserves can be frozen or confiscated for political reasons, states turn to an asset outside administrative control.

Countries are taking steps to reduce dependence on the dollar. China and Russia conduct trade in yuan and rubles. BRICS countries are developing payment systems outside SWIFT, the U.S.-controlled network that routes international payments. Bilateral currency swap

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weakness

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arrangements have expanded, allowing countries to settle trade directly without converting through dollars. Saudi Arabia now accepts yuan for oil sales alongside dollars.

These are not comprehensive replacements for the dollar system, but they represent infrastructure being built to reduce dependence on a currency that now finances war, enforces sanctions, and carries the risk of confiscation. The dollar's declining dominance reflects that shift: Fewer governments are willing to hold reserves that double as leverage against them.

Stagflation and the assault on labor

The instability exported through war, sanctions, and currency coercion does not stay abroad. It returns home as higher prices, job losses, and deeper insecurity for working people. Stagflation is not a mystery or a policy failure; it is a class outcome.

It is the domestic form of an imperialist system that can no longer stabilize accumulation internationally and compensates by extracting more from labor at home.

Prices rise because monopolies use their market power to maintain profit growth. When workers win higher wages, this cuts into profit margins – profits fall because more of the value created goes to workers rather than capitalists. But price increases themselves are driven by monopoly control, not by wages.

The response to the last major episode of stagflation was to make working people pay. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Federal Reserve drove interest rates sharply higher, triggering deep recessions. Millions lost their jobs. Unions were weakened or broken. Wages were forced down. Inflation eventually eased not because the system was stabilized, but because unemployment rose, wages were forced down, and working people were made poorer.

The Federal Reserve now swings between two tools, neither of which resolves the crisis. When interest rates are raised, hiring slows, unemployment rises, and workers are pushed into weaker bargaining positions. When rates are lowered, as they have been repeatedly in recent months, the result is not renewed production but cheaper credit, rising debt, and asset inflation that benefits corporations and investors while prices remain high for working people.

In both cases, the burden falls in the same place. Jobs stay insecure, wages remain under pressure, and prices do not come down because the underlying problem is not monetary policy, but an economy that can no longer expand production profitably. Stagflation persists because capitalism under imperialist decline no longer has a policy path that restores stability. It delivers inflation and unemployment together.

From creditor to debtor

The United States was once the world's main creditor because it produced a large share of the world's goods, ran trade surpluses, and lent capital to stabilize capitalism and consolidate U.S. dominance in Europe and Japan after World War II. That material foundation no longer exists.

Today, the United States is the world's largest debtor, running chronic trade deficits and borrowing continuously to finance consumption, war spending, and financial stability at home. This arrangement is sustained not by expanded production, but by issuing growing quantities of dollar-denominated debt — Treasury bonds, credit, and financial claims — that are absorbed globally because of the dollar's reserve role.

Since the early 1970s, the United States has operated without any gold backing for its currency. Before then, under the postwar Bretton Woods system, foreign governments could exchange U.S. dollars for gold at a fixed rate, which limited how many dollars Washington could issue without draining its gold reserves.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon ended that arrangement. From that point on, the dollar was no longer tied to gold at all. Its value rested instead on the power of the U.S. state, its dominance of global trade and finance, and its ability to enforce the dollar's use through political and military means.

This shift allowed the United States to run large deficits indefinitely. Rather than settling international obligations by exporting goods or gold, Washington could pay in dollars whose value declined over time. In practice, this meant financing wars, imports, and bailouts by simply printing more dollars – no longer backed by gold – and issuing debt, shifting the cost onto others through inflation and dollar depreciation instead of expanding production.

In effect, debts are settled with claims worth less in real terms — a modern equivalent of paying obligations with clipped coins. The dollar's reserve role still props up this arrangement, but it now rests on the ability to export inflation and absorb global savings, not on the material strength of U.S. industry.

Money that once would have gone into factories and equipment is now poured into stock buybacks, real estate speculation, and financial markets. The AI boom fits the same pattern: Companies are valued on promises to replace workers and cut costs rather than on producing more goods people actually need. Productive capacity shrinks even as paper wealth, corporate valuations, and executive pay soar.

Earlier periods of dollar devaluation and deficit spending were used to restore profitability while preserving monopoly power. Those measures shifted losses onto workers and weaker economies but were backed by a growing industrial base.

Automation and the dollar's shrinking base

The push toward automation is not driven by abundance or social benefit, but by capitalism's inability to expand profitably. Firms invest in machines because expanding production no longer reliably produces higher profits. Jobs are eliminated not because society needs less work done, but because wages are treated as a cost to be removed in an economy that can no longer expand profitably.

As automation spreads and more investment goes into machinery rather than labor, profit rates are squeezed because machines do not create new value. Only living labor does. The result is overproduction relative to profitable opportunities: more goods produced with less labor employed, while capital accumulates faster than it can find profitable outlets.

The dollar's reserve role once rested on U.S. capitalism's productive strength — its factories drew in investment and organized production worldwide. Automation under crisis conditions produces the opposite: fewer productive jobs, shrinking opportunities for profitable investment, and an economy that spreads instability instead of growth. The dollar becomes a tool for debt and speculation, not for building anything.

Even sections of the ruling class recognize the impasse. Proposals for universal basic in-

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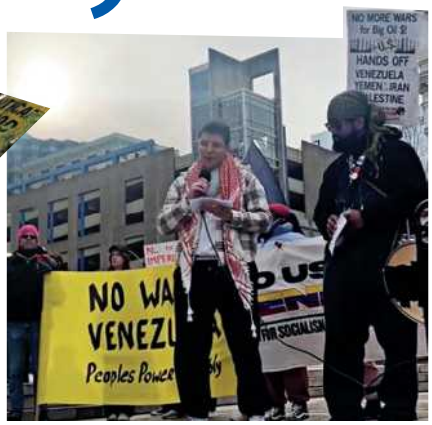
Protesters in over 75 U.S. cities say 'no war

By Gregory E. Williams

Hundreds participated in the Baltimore protest. SLL photo: Sharon Black



Peoples Power Assembly organizers Jace Carter and Colby Byrd speak at anti-war protest outside Baltimore City Hall.

Photo: Peoples Power Assembly

On Jan. 3, people across the United States protested Trump's war on Venezuela. There were actions in over 100 cities, including New York, Denver, and Baltimore.

In a talk at the Baltimore rally, Peoples Power Assembly organizer Jace Carter said:

"The U.S. bombing of Venezuela and kidnapping of President Maduro is not only a violation of Venezuela's sovereignty. It is an attack and threat to all oppressed and working-class people around the world.

"Here in the belly of the beast, and specifically here in Baltimore, people are struggling to keep food on the table, keep heat to stay warm, and keep their jobs to provide for themselves and their families. All while the drones produced at the Old Bethlehem Steel location are sent to aid in the U.S. terror blockade of the entire Caribbean.

"Corporate politicians have made it clear time and time again that they will always have money for death machines and occupation, not for people's needs."

Organizer Colby Byrd with the PPA added:

"The violence carried out by the fascist pigs abroad is the same violence carried out by fascist pigs here in the U.S. Maduro and his family were kidnapped out of their land and thrown on a boat in chains.

"Is this not the same story of those who have been victim to brutal ICE raids? Is this not the same story of our Black ancestors who were stolen from Africa for the sake of the overseers back in the U.S.?

"The fascist bombing of Caracas, the capital of the revolutionary government, is no different from the fascist bombing of Black Tulsa. Both were more than just cities. They were

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Who are Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores – and why

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This was not a secret operation. It was not done through proxies or deniability. It was an open attack on Venezuela's right to govern itself. The assault was announced, justified by executive order, and defended with raw imperialist arrogance. The goal was not just to remove a president. It was to deny an entire country the right to choose its own political and economic course.

Cilia Flores was not taken because she is married to the president. She is a political leader in her own right. Trained as a lawyer, she rose through Venezuela's institutions and became president of the National Assembly. During periods of intense pressure from the opposition, she was one of the most visible defenders of the Bolivarian Revolution inside the state. After the 2002 coup attempt against Hugo Chávez, she helped keep the legislature functioning. She later served as attorney general and as a senior leader in the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

Flores has long rejected the label "First Lady." She has called herself the "First Revolutionary Combatant." By that, she has meant that her role is not symbolic or ceremonial. She sees herself as an active participant in a collective political struggle, not an accessory to presidential power.

Her inclusion in U.S. indictments and her seizure alongside Maduro make the political purpose of the operation clear. Flores was not targeted because of proven crimes. She was targeted because she represents the civilian and institutional core of the Bolivarian state. She is a woman leader with her own base, history, and authority. Seizing her was meant to cripple not only the presidency but the wider leadership that has resisted U.S. intervention for more than twenty years.

To understand why Washington seized Nicolás Maduro, it is necessary to understand who he is — and what the Bolivarian leadership he represents has meant for Venezuela.

From bus operator to Bolivarian leader

Maduro did not come from Venezuela's traditional political elite. He began his political life as a bus operator in Caracas and a trade union organizer in the city's transport system. In the 1980s, he helped form an unofficial union for Metro workers, an experience that grounded his politics in the daily struggles of working people rather than in electoral maneuvering or elite sponsorship.

This background mattered. When Hugo Chávez burst onto the national stage in the late 1990s, he drew strength from militants, organizers, and rank-and-file workers who understood the limits of Venezuela's old political order. Maduro was part of that layer. His rise within the Bolivarian movement was not accidental, nor was it based on personal charisma alone. It reflected years of organizational work, party discipline, and political loyalty during periods of intense pressure.

Maduro was elected to the National Assembly in 2000 and later served as its president. He went on to become foreign minister, where he played a central role in building alliances against U.S. domination, particularly through regional integration projects and closer ties with Cuba and other countries resisting Washington's dictates. In 2012, Chávez appointed him vice president and publicly identified him as his political successor.

Chosen successor amid mounting pressure

When Chávez died in March 2013, Maduro stepped into leadership during a moment of profound uncertainty. The special presidential election that followed was closely contested, but Maduro won. His opponent, Henrique Capriles Radonski, came from one of Venezuela's wealthiest families and was backed openly by domestic capital and the U.S. government. The election result was never accepted by Washington, which had already begun treating Maduro's presidency as illegitimate from its first day.

When sanctions and diplomatic pressure failed to break the Venezuelan state over the following years, Washington shifted tactics. The invasion was justified after the fact through sweeping legal claims and executive assertions that recast regime change as law enforcement rather than war.

Trump's claim that Venezuela "stole" oil

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on Venezuela!'

SLL photo: Kevin Niemann

Protesters gathered outside the Colorado State Capital in Denver.

Black Alliance for Peace contingent carries a banner in New York's Times Square where thousands rallied opposing war.

SLL photos: Melinda Butterfield

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symbols of defiance against white supremacy. They were places where those who did the labor controlled their fate and that very idea scares the U.S. empire.

"The violence is the exact same. Pigs over from the U.S. bomb Venezuela and leave them with no resources while pigs here kill Arabbers [Baltimore street vendors with horse-drawn carts] and leave West Baltimore with no resources.

"It is the same fight. It is the same pigs.

"If we want to put an end to wars in the name of white supremacy and the pillaging of resources, we must pull the plug on the system designed to run on it. If we want our money to go to food, housing, education, transportation, and health care and other people's needs, we must not only reject imperialist war but actively work to bring the whole machine down." #

Washington kidnapped them

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and land from the United States is completely unfounded. Venezuela nationalized its oil industry in the mid-1970s, long before Chávez or Maduro came to power, as an assertion of national sovereignty later expanded under the Bolivarian process. U.S. companies were compensated at the time, and no serious legal body has ever recognized U.S. ownership of Venezuela's natural resources. These assertions functioned not as evidence, but as ideological cover.

Don-Roe Doctrine: empire without disguise

What made this operation different was not its illegality, but the fact that it was openly declared and politically justified as an act of imperialist power. Trump himself described the action as the first application of what he called the "Don-Roe Doctrine," a personalized version of the Monroe Doctrine. Its purpose, he said plainly, was to reassert U.S. dominance in the Western Hemisphere and to expel any independent presence by states such as China, Russia, and Iran. After the invasion, Trump boasted that "American dominance in the western hemisphere will never be questioned again."

He was even more explicit about Venezuela itself. The United States, he said, would "run the country" until a transition could be arranged. He spoke enthusiastically about reopening oil fields, rebuilding infrastructure through U.S. corporations, and securing access to Venezuela's vast reserves of oil, gold, and rare earth minerals. Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves. That fact alone explains more about the invasion than any indictment ever could.

International reaction was swift. Russia, China, Iran, and other governments condemned the action as a flagrant violation of international law. The United Nations secretary-general warned that the prohibition on the use of force had been breached.

The precedent is a familiar one.

In 1965, the United States invaded the Dominican Republic to block the return of Juan Bosch, a democratically elected president whose reform program had been overthrown two years earlier by a military coup backed by Washington. When a popular uprising sought to restore Bosch to office, U.S. troops occupied the country, crushed the constitutionalist forces, and paved the way for the consolidation of a compliant regime aligned with U.S. interests.

Nearly two decades later, Washington invaded Grenada to destroy a revolutionary government that had broken with U.S. domination in the Caribbean, an assault that included the killing of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and the deaths of Cuban civilian personnel working in the country to build a hospital.

In both cases, legality was improvised after the fact, and military force was used to decide political outcomes that could not be controlled through pressure alone. The operation against Venezuela follows the same pattern, updated for a new phase of imperialist decline.

The human cost was immediate. Venezuelan authorities report that more than 80 people were killed in the attacks, including civilians and members of the armed forces. Cuba confirmed that 32 Cuban personnel stationed in Venezuela at the government's request died resisting the assault. Residents of Caracas described explosions, destroyed homes, and mass fear. One public worker, Linda Unamumo, said the blast that tore through her roof forced her to flee with her family. "It was really traumatic," she said.

The Trump administration acknowledged injuries among U.S. troops but claimed that none were killed.

A government still standing

In Caracas, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez assumed the role of acting president under constitutional provisions and denounced the seizure of Maduro and Flores as a kidnapping. She demanded proof of life and called on the international community to recognize the violation of Venezuelan sovereignty. The Venezuelan state, she said, remains intact. Maduro, despite his forced removal, remains the legitimate president.

"Our country aspires to live without external threats," Rodríguez said, "in an environment of respect and international cooperation."

That aspiration is precisely what Washington moved to crush. #

‘We need allies, not war’: Los Angeles activists condemn U.S. attack on Venezuela

The following are remarks by John Parker of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Struggle for Socialism Party, delivered at a Jan. 3 emergency protest in Los Angeles organized by Unión del Barrio, the Community Self-Defense Coalition, and other organizations.

Introduction by Ron Gochez, Unión del Barrio

We’re going to get started. Good morning to everyone, or good afternoon for those just joining us.

Thank you all for being here. The reason we’re here today, on behalf of Unión del Barrio, the Community Self-Defense Coalition, and several other organizations that are present, is because we know what happened early this morning in Venezuela. We’re very concerned about what happened, and we’re here to share statements from various organizations.

Up first, we want to bring up someone who was just in Venezuela a couple of weeks ago and had the chance to see things firsthand. I’ll let him talk about it, but I want to bring up John Parker from the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, and also from the Struggle for Socialism Party. John Parker.

John Parker, Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice / Struggle for Socialism Party

It’s so inspiring to have this action right here, and it’s so important, the things that we do. We absolutely condemn the brutal assault and the kidnapping that the U.S. government — the criminal U.S. government — is carrying out right now. One of the things we should demand is that Trump be jailed and that they free Maduro.

That’s right. What is the Democratic Party doing right now? Are they saying anything about it? Is the Republican Party saying anything about this criminal behavior, these war crimes that are going on right now?

John Parker speaking at a Los Angeles protest.

I can tell you, a couple of weeks ago I was in Venezuela as part of a U.S. delegation to try to stop the war on Venezuela. And I can tell you why they don’t want Venezuela, why they kidnap Maduro. It has nothing to do with drugs. That’s a lie, and they know it’s a lie.

What they don’t want you to know is what the Venezuelan people and the government are doing right now to try to stop the horrible attack on the economy by the U.S. government, its sanctions, and things like that. What are they doing? They’re trying to build socialism in Venezuela.

I was there. I saw what they were doing. I saw the love that the people in Venezuela have for their president, for Maduro, and for the vice president who is now in charge. They have a great love. I saw Maduro walking around in crowds and not being afraid, not surrounded by heavy security, because he is secured by the love of the people and their love for socialism.

And that’s their “crime.” That’s why they’re trying to stop it — and we will not tolerate that.

We need food. We need health care. We need all the things required to feed our children. We don’t need war in Venezuela. We need allies. Venezuela was giving oil; they were helping poor people and poor communities in this country meet their basic needs, to stay warm through CITGO and things like that. That’s what they don’t like. They don’t like solidarity.

We’re going to build solidarity, and we’re not going to stop until this administration — whoever is collaborating with genocide in Gaza or wherever — is held accountable, until those folks are in jail and the real leaders of this community are able to take charge. #

Dollar’s weakness is imperialism’s weakness

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come reflect an awareness that automation under capitalism displaces workers faster than the system can provide wages or stable employment. Jobs are eliminated, incomes are cut off, and purchasing power shrinks, leaving goods that cannot be sold at prices that sustain profit.

Capitalism has no mechanism for organizing abundance without undermining the profit system itself. What remains is a reserve currency backed not by productive expansion, but by financial coercion, military force, and debt — a narrowing base that cannot sustain a stable global monetary system.

Imperialist decay

The weakening of the dollar marks an advanced stage of imperialist decay. It reflects an economy that can no longer stabilize itself through production, but relies instead on debt, war, monopoly pricing, and coercion.

Imperialist profits increasingly come not from producing and selling goods in competitive markets, but from monopolizing energy, technology, shipping, credit, and payment systems — and using military force to maintain that monopoly.

The crisis of the dollar is inseparable from this broader breakdown of imperialism itself. It is not a technical malfunction or a temporary adjustment, but the unraveling of an imperialist system that can no longer expand on its own terms. It can only manage decline by transferring costs — through inflation, war, and austerity — onto workers and oppressed peoples worldwide. #

From Attica to Rikers to Brooklyn: death behind bars in New York

By Lallan Schoenstein

The detention of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and revolutionary leader Cilia Flores – prisoners of war and political captives of U.S. imperialism – inside a Brooklyn jail in New York State draws urgent attention to the racist and lethal violence embedded in the state's prison system.

In July 2022, Ladale Kennedy was the 1,055th prisoner reported to die in New York State custody since 2014. The true number of prisoners killed by the system is unknown, and many deaths have never been reported.

Kennedy, a 41-year-old Black man who was reported to be mentally ill, was pepper-sprayed by guards, beaten, handcuffed, held face-first under running water, and fitted with a "spit hood," a mesh restraint.

New York State prison guards restrain Ladale Kennedy against a wall. They then covered his head with a "spit hood," a mesh restraint identified by medical experts as the cause of his death in july 2022.

A video still shows New York State prison guards beating and kicking Robert L. Brooks while he was handcuffed and restrained on a gurney in a prison infirmary. Brooks, a 43-year-old Black man, was killed by the assault in December 2024.

A video shows that Kennedy said "I'm sorry" at least eight times as they pulled him from his cell. He pleaded with the guards not to kill him. He told them he could not breathe at least 20 times during the encounter.

Dr. Michael Baden, a former New York City medical examiner and consulting pathologist who reviews prisoners' deaths, said: "In my opinion, this was a death from asphyxia caused by the spit mask. They put a spit hood on, which you can see. He starts at that point, saying he can't breathe."

The local medical examiner classified the incident, in July 2022, as something of an official mystery: cause and manner "undetermined."

Kennedy was tortured to death after failing to return food trays and cups that had been handed to him in his cell. Details of the killing were first reported by New York Times journalist Jan Ransom in an article published Dec. 31, 2025, and updated Jan. 6, 2026.

In a prior case that became widely reported, Robert L. Brooks and Messiah Nantwi died after being tortured by New York State prison guards. Both Black men were handcuffed by the guards before being beaten, leaving them unable to defend themselves or even shield their faces.

Robert L. Brooks, a 43-year-old Black man, was killed in December 2024 while held in a prison infirmary. Brooks was placed on an examination bed, and a video shows that in the next 10 minutes he was punched, kicked and appeared to be choked — or at least lifted by his neck — by five officers.

Robert L. Brooks

Messiah Nantwi

Messiah Nantwi, a 22-year-old inmate, died in March 2025 after being violently beaten by prison guards. He suffered fatal traumatic brain injuries from blows with fists, boots, and batons.

Their cases caused so much outrage that in February 2025, six prison guards were charged with murder, gang assault, manslaughter, and tampering with evidence by the state's attorney general. Seventeen others were suspended.

Before the killing of Robert Brooks, there had been numerous reports of prisoner abuse. C.O. Anthony Farina and Sergeant Glenn Trombly, both implicated in the killing of Robert Brooks, were involved in the 2020 assault and disfigurement of the inmate William Alvarez. In 2015, Trombly was involved in the assault of the inmate Equarn White, after which White needed a wheelchair while recovering. C.O. Nicholas Anzalone, also implicated in the killing of Brooks, was one of four prison guards named in a federal lawsuit for the 2020 beating of Adam Bauer, a non-violent drug offender.

Just before the guards were charged in the killing of Mr. Brooks in February, thousands of guards walked off the job in illegal strikes across the state, prompting Gov. Kathy Hochul to deploy the National Guard.

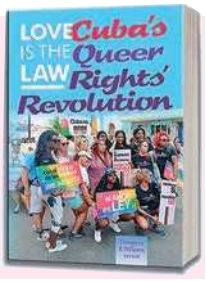
When officers began returning to work weeks later, Duane Brown, a prisoner at Green Haven, said, "The abuse has been worse since the strike." Guards had beaten Brown until he was unconscious in September.

Drawing on thousands of pages of court records and interviews with dozens of current and former inmates, Ransom identified more than 120 instances in the past decade in which guards were described as having punched, kicked or stomped on prisoners, smashed their fingers in cell doors, held their legs apart and struck their genitals with batons, and even waterboarded them — all while the prisoners were handcuffed or otherwise restrained.

She reports that advocates and prisoners have linked the increase partly to seething anger among guards over recently enacted limits on their ability to use solitary confinement.

Across the prison system, the rate at which staff members have used force against inmates has been climbing steadily for the past decade. #

LOVE IS THE LAW
Cuba's Queer Rights Revolution
Gregory E. Williams
tinyurl.com/Cuba-LoveisLaw tinyurl.com/Read-LOVEistheLAW



U.S. uses military force to seize oil and strangle Venezuela

By Gary Wilson

U.S. Southern Command footage shows special forces descending onto an oil tanker during a military seizure operation targeting Venezuelan oil shipments.

Another line has been crossed in the U.S. imperialist assault on Venezuela.

By seizing oil tankers on the high seas, including a Russian-flagged vessel, the United States has moved from economic warfare to open military coercion in defense of monopoly control over oil.

This is not a misunderstanding at sea. It is not a law enforcement action or a dispute over paperwork or flags. It is imperialism acting in the open.

Trump has also threatened a "second strike" against Venezuela, warning that further military action will follow if the government does not submit fully to U.S. demands.

Seizing oil by force

U.S. military forces have boarded and seized a Russian-flagged oil tanker in international waters, escalating Washington's assault on Venezuela and discarding the legal restraints that once served as cover. The vessel, renamed Marinera after operating as the Bella-1, was taken after a pursuit that stretched from the Caribbean into the North Atlantic.

Helicopters and Coast Guard ships carried out the seizure. Russian officials say the tanker was under submarine escort.

This was not an accident. It was a test of power.

U.S. forces first stopped the tanker on Dec. 21, claiming a seizure warrant because the ship allegedly lacked a valid national flag. The crew refused to be boarded and sailed on. Washington responded not with diplomacy but with pursuit across oceans. During the chase, the vessel was formally registered under the Russian flag, and Moscow demanded that the United States stand down.

The demand was ignored.

The seizure did not take place near Venezuela, but in international waters between Scotland and Iceland. Even the New York Times described the operation as part of a Trump administration blockade of Venezuelan oil shipments, confirming that Washington is enforcing control far beyond the region itself.

Russian officials called the seizure what it is: piracy. They cited the principle of freedom of navigation on the high seas, a principle Washington invokes when it serves imperialist interests and discards when it does not. U.S. officials told Reuters there was no direct confrontation with Russian forces nearby. That absence should not reassure anyone. It only means the clash did not happen this time.

Militarizing the blockade

On the same day, U.S. forces seized a second tanker, the M/T Sophia, reportedly carrying roughly two million barrels of Venezuelan crude. The U.S. Southern Command released a video of troops descending from helicopters, edited to look like a promotional reel. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem summed it up in a slogan: "America first at sea."

That phrase is not rhetoric. It is policy.

Washington is now enforcing a naval blockade in all but name, using military force to decide who may sell oil, who may transport it, and which governments are allowed to function. The mask has fallen from the operation, because the president himself removed it.

Force in service of oil profits

Donald Trump has said openly that the goal is to "get the oil flowing" so that "very large United States oil companies" can enter Venezuela and "start making money." He has admitted to briefing oil executives before and after military action and plans meetings with them to discuss "security guarantees." This is the U.S. government acting exactly as capitalism requires: using military force as the armed instrument of monopoly capital.

Trump has gone further, promising U.S. oil corporations that the government will cover or guarantee the costs of "rebuilding" Venezuela's oil infrastructure, assuring executives that "they'll do very well." While social programs are slashed at home, tens of billions are being lined up to secure corporate access to seized oil fields.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio made the objective explicit, saying the United States intends to seize and sell between 30 million and 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil and control how the proceeds are distributed. This is not sanctions enforcement but a direct claim to administer another country's resources by force.

U.S. officials have now stated openly that Washington intends to control Venezuelan oil sales and the revenues they generate indefinitely, not as a temporary sanction. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said the United States will first market oil already in storage and then oversee future production, with proceeds deposited into accounts controlled by the U.S. government.

President Trump has said Venezuela would be allowed to use those funds only to purchase "American-made" goods. These statements strip away any remaining pretense of sanctions enforcement. What is being asserted is the direct rule of imperialist monopoly capital over another country's natural resources, enforced by military power. Oil production, sales, and revenue distribution are to be subordinated to U.S. corporate interests, with the state acting openly as their armed administrator.

There is no mystery here. Sanctions and pressure drive down the value of a country's resources. Investors move in to grab them cheap. Military force is used to clear the way. The president has now said this openly.

This is not a show of strength. It is imperialism in decline. As it loses control, it turns to force, accepts greater risks, and pushes toward open confrontation. Law does not restrain it.

The danger does not stop with Venezuela. The seizure of a Russian-flagged tanker is not a side issue. It shows U.S. imperialism using military force against anyone who interferes with its drive to control oil and enforce its domination of global energy flows.

Imperialism does not merely ignore law; it now openly announces its intention to replace it. When its interests are threatened, it turns openly to force in defense of profit. What is happening in the Caribbean and the Atlantic is not an exception. It is a measure of how far U.S. imperialism will go to hold onto control. #

‘Donroe Doctrine’: When sanctions fail, U.S. imperialism wages war on Venezuela

By Lev Koufax

Trump’s ‘Donroe Doctrine’ graphic makes explicit what the ruling class can no longer accomplish through economic means: military domination of Latin America. This isn’t Theodore Roosevelt’s confident imperialism – it’s the violence of an empire that has run out of other options.

The world has looked on with horror as the United States launched its largest and most aggressive military operation in the Western Hemisphere in decades. After months of attacks on migrant boats and seafood industry workers, the U.S. imperialist class escalated its assault on Venezuela.

More than 80 people are dead. Dozens of military and industrial facilities have been reduced to rubble. Venezuela’s democratically elected president, Nicolás Maduro, was kidnapped and paraded before the world — a deliberate display of imperialist arrogance and political theater.

Maduro is a real human being and the elected leader of a sovereign country. Yet the United States seized him in the middle of the night, chained him, and displayed him in full view of the global media. This was not a covert operation or a misunderstanding. It was a public act meant to intimidate, humiliate, and assert domination.

The ‘Donroe Doctrine’ and the return to open colonialism

While the United States is no stranger to military conquest, the overthrow of governments, or the public degradation of anti-colonial leaders, this brazen attack marks a dangerous escalation. The methods may echo 19th-century colonialism — direct military seizure, public humiliation, and rule by force — but this is not a return to that era. This is something far more desperate: imperialism in terminal decline, with military violence as its last remaining tool.

This turn to open aggression is driven by economics, not principle or geopolitics. The decision to raise the stakes against Venezuela reflects a U.S. imperialist class strategy to curb its loss of global economic power. Trump, acting as its political executor, has even branded this revival of 19th-century expansionism as the “Donroe Doctrine.”

By explicitly referencing the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, the administration signals that it no longer feels the need to hide behind the “humanitarian” masks of the past. The “Donroe Doctrine” is a blunt admission: The Western Hemisphere is once again viewed as a colonial backyard to be policed by the “Big Stick” of U.S. military might.

Economic contraction and the turn to force

After World War II, U.S. capitalism stood at the center of global production. Its factories, markets, and financial power shaped the postwar order. That position did not last. Capital was exported to lower-wage labor markets across the oppressed world, and U.S. control over production weakened.

With less control over global labor, the monopoly capitalists lose leverage. When sanctions, trade pressure, and financial coercion no longer secure obedience, U.S. imperialism turns to military force. The war carried out under Trump against Venezuela follows this pattern. It echoes earlier moments when an economically strained imperialist class escalated its assault on national self-determination and the working class worldwide.

This pattern has appeared before under similar conditions. In the late 1890s, the United States faced a deep domestic economic crisis, surplus capital searching for new outlets, and growing pressure to expand beyond informal influence. Political leaders and the press supplied humanitarian and defensive justifications, but the underlying drive was economic expansion. When commercial penetration and indirect control proved insufficient, the ruling class escalated toward open war and formal domination. These conditions converged in what became known as the U.S. war against Spain in 1898.

1898: The ‘splendid little war’ of the robber barons

In April of 1898, William McKinley requested that Congress declare war on Spain. McKinley proclaimed that the United States had an obligation to intervene to defend the independence of Cuba from Spanish imperialism. Funny, that the country that exterminated its indigenous population, enslaved millions of Black Africans, and spent the entire 19th century expanding its territory, suddenly was concerned with the well-being and self-determination of oppressed people. McKinley also proclaimed that a U.S. intervention would be an act of self-defense, citing the explosion of the battleship USS Maine. Politicians and newspapers owned by right-wing capitalists such as William Randolph Hearst claimed Spain was responsible for the warship’s destruction.

All of this — absolutely all of it — was a baldfaced lie. Presidential documents signed by McKinley in August 1898 instructed the U.S. military, “Where it can be done prudently, confer with the leading citizens of Cuba ... in an unofficial manner and endeavor to ascertain their sentiments toward the United States, and their views as to such measures as they may deem necessary or important for the future welfare and good government of the island.”

On the eve of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the Washington Post already had its eyes set beyond Cuba: “We are face to face with a strange destiny. The taste of Empire is in the mouth of the people even as the taste of blood in the jungle.”

In his “People’s History of the United States,” historian Howard Zinn accurately analyzed the war as a ruling class project. These robber barons, as they were called, knew the war would create a boon for the massive U.S. iron industry and create new markets for manufacturers to sell their goods.

The parallels to 1898 are instructive, but the crucial difference must be understood. In 1898, U.S. imperialism was ascending — expanding its productive base, opening new markets, establishing economic dominance. The war with Spain was an expression of capitalist strength and confidence.

In 2025, U.S. imperialism faces the opposite condition: declining productive capacity,

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Oil wealth, class power, and imperialist siege in Venezuela

By Gary Wilson

The political durability of the Bolivarian Revolution is grounded in material gains won by the working class and the poor. It is anchored in a concrete social contract that transforms Venezuela's oil wealth into improvements in daily life and reshapes the country's political landscape in the process. Since Hugo Chávez's election in 1998, the redistribution of surplus has forged and sustained a mass base rooted not in symbolism or ideology, but in tangible changes to living conditions that give Chavismo its popular legitimacy.

Oil revenues and working-class gains

Central to this shift was the reassertion of state control over Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). Chávez's government broke the autonomy of the oil technocracy and redirected oil revenues toward working-class communities long excluded from national wealth.

Oil income is treated not as an abstract macroeconomic lever, but as a social resource. Through price controls, direct state provisioning, and heavy subsidies, the state intervenes across daily life — food, housing, health care, education, and public services — while expanded social spending and labor protections allow workers to win higher wages, improved benefits, and greater economic security.

The results were neither marginal nor symbolic. In less than a decade, poverty was nearly cut in half, while extreme poverty fell by more than two-thirds. University enrollment more than doubled, unemployment was reduced by half, and child malnutrition declined sharply. Income inequality fell so sharply that by 2012 Venezuela had become the most economically equal country in Latin America.

These were not isolated policy wins; they were the cumulative effects of a redistributionist model funded by oil revenues and enforced through political struggle against domestic capital and foreign imperialist interests.

This redistribution forms the material foundation of Chavismo's working-class base.

A placard depicting Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro during the 2013 presidential transition, when Maduro was elected following Chávez's death. The Bolivarian project was grounded in the redistribution of oil revenues that delivered material gains to working people.

It does not represent a departure from Venezuela's economic structure, but a decisive intervention into it. Venezuela is already an oil economy; the political question is whether that wealth flows upward to capital or is redirected toward social reproduction.

The external shock: oil prices collapse

The rupture comes from outside that social contract. When Nicolás Maduro was elected president following Chávez's death in March 2013, global oil prices soon collapsed. In 2014, prices fell by roughly half, beginning a decline that reached nearly 70% by early 2016. State revenues were slashed in a matter of months. The fiscal capacity that had sustained subsidies, social programs, and price controls was sharply reduced, placing immense strain on the gains achieved in the previous decade.

Had this revenue shock been the full extent of Venezuela's difficulties, recovery might have followed the eventual rebound in oil prices. Instead, the downturn was locked in place by escalating U.S. sanctions.

Imperialist sanctions and economic warfare

Beginning in 2017, Washington imposed measures that went far beyond diplomatic pressure. Venezuelan oil sales were blocked, state assets were frozen, and the government was prohibited from refinancing debt or accessing international credit. It was open economic warfare.

The United States stripped Venezuela of control over key offshore assets, including U.S.-based refineries, cutting off access to critical sources of income.

The timing was decisive. As global oil prices recovered, Venezuela's production remained choked off — not by geology or technical capacity, but by financial and commercial strangulation. Sanctions foreclosed any path to stabilization, let alone renewed redistribution. What began as a revenue shock became a sustained economic siege.

The human cost of siege

The human cost of this siege was severe. Between 2014 and 2021, Venezuela's economy contracted by more than 80%. Hyperinflation destroyed wages entirely, peaking at over 130,000% in 2018. Poverty surged across the population as access to food, medicine, and basic services deteriorated under conditions of blockade.

This immiseration produced one of the largest migrations in modern Latin American history. Roughly 7.7 million people — about a quarter of the population — were forced to leave the country in search of survival. This was not a voluntary exodus driven by consumer aspirations or political disaffection. It was the physical displacement of a working class whose material supports were systematically dismantled.

Working-class base under strain, not defeated

Venezuela's economic difficulties are often narrated as a morality tale about mismanagement or ideology. That framing obscures the underlying political economy. The Bolivarian Revolution achieved real gains for working people by redirecting oil revenues away from capital and imperialist control. The later economic deterioration was driven not by redistribution, but by imperialist intervention following the 2014 oil price shock.

What was damaged was not political legitimacy or popular consent, but the material infrastructure that sustains social reproduction under a hostile global order. The working-class base built through redistribution remains in place, even as sanctions and blockade grind down living conditions. #

CHINA: Building Socialism in an Imperialist World is a report on how over a billion people are building a socialist society inside a world dominated by imperialism. The report shows how socialist construction created the foundations of modern China: state ownership of key sectors of industry, technology and banking, planning, broad participation, universal education and healthcare, and an industrial base able to withstand pressure from the capitalist powers.

China: Building Socialism in an Imperialist World offers a clear, direct account of how socialism is built in real conditions – and why that process continues to shake the world system shaped by imperialism.

From the Monroe Doctrine to Caracas: how a declining empire turns to force

By Gary Wilson

The jets over Caracas in the early hours of Jan. 3 were not an aberration. They were a signal.

By the time the sun rose, Venezuela's president had been kidnapped by U.S. special forces and flown north. Washington called it law enforcement. But no police action requires the suppression of a country's air defenses or the use of military bases across a hemisphere.

What happened in Caracas was not about one man — it was about power and how that power is now being exercised.

Jets over Caracas were not an aberration

What happened in Venezuela was not a sudden break with the past, but a clear expression of how U.S. power now operates when other means fail.

Across Latin America, the message was unmistakable. The United States no longer feels bound by international law. It is willing to act with open belligerence, directly and militarily, to remove governments that stand in its way. This was not a covert operation hidden behind deniability. It was meant to be seen.

Original Monroe Doctrine: rule by conquest

From the beginning, U.S. dominance in the hemisphere was enforced through violence, with independence tolerated only so long as it did not interfere with expansion and profit.

The Monroe Doctrine did not protect the Americas from empire. It cleared the field for one. European powers were warned off so Washington could expand without competition. Governments were toppled. Land was seized. Resistance was met with occupation and massacre. This was colonialism in its direct form, backed by the gunboat and the army.

After World War II, dominance

With much of the world's industry in ruins, U.S. capitalism could rely on production, credit, and the dollar to secure control without permanent occupation.

After 1945, the United States emerged as an industrial giant, producing close to half of the world's total output. Its factories supplied reconstruction. Its banks financed recovery. The dollar became the main currency of trade and reserves. Under these conditions, control could be exercised through loans, trade access, and investment rather than constant military force.

Production ruled, force in the background

Military power never disappeared, but it functioned mainly as insurance, rarely needed when economic leverage could achieve the same ends.

Governments that aligned with U.S. interests were rewarded with access to markets and credit. Those that resisted faced isolation or destabilization. The threat of force remained, but it did not have to be used everywhere. Economic dominance did the work.

This arrangement also helped stabilize conditions inside the United States, unevenly and temporarily. The empire could afford concessions at home because profits flowed in from abroad.

The long industrial decline since the 1970s

As factories closed and production moved abroad, the material basis for U.S. economic dominance steadily eroded, even as the empire tried to maintain its reach.

Beginning in the 1970s, U.S. capitalism shifted production overseas in search of cheaper labor and higher returns. Manufacturing hollowed out. The economy leaned more heavily on finance and debt. By the early 2000s, the U.S. share of world production had fallen dramatically; today it stands at around 17%. The dollar still dominates, but increasingly through pressure rather than unmatched strength.

From economic leverage to open coercion

When loans, sanctions, and diplomatic pressure no longer deliver submission, the system falls back on its most direct instrument.

Sanctions that once bent governments now often harden resistance. Proxy forces falter. Sanctioned governments build alternative trade routes and alliances. In this context, force is no longer a last resort. It becomes the primary tool.

The El Palito refinery in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, Dec. 21, 2025. Venezuela's oil industry has been a central target of U.S. intervention from sanctions to direct force.

Why Venezuela became a test case

A government that retained control of key resources and resisted U.S. subordination presented an obstacle that economic pressure alone could not remove.

Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves. U.S. corporations once dominated that sector before nationalization broke their hold. Years of sanctions and political pressure failed to restore control. Caracas maintained ties with Russia, China, and Iran. Economic leverage no longer worked. The response was force.

Drugs and courts as cover for seizure

Criminal charges and moral language serve to disguise an act of force that is, at bottom, about control over labor, land, and oil.

Claims about drugs and terrorism do not explain the operation. They are an attempt to justify it. Imperialism has always required a story to tell, especially when it acts openly. Today that story is law enforcement. Yesterday it was anti-communism. The function is the same.

An empire that can no longer afford consent

Where influence once flowed through credit and trade, it now comes through sanctions and military force.

U.S. leaders now speak openly about seizing resources and running other countries. This bluntness does not reflect strength. It reflects the exhaustion of older methods. The empire can no longer afford consent, so it imposes obedience.

What imperial decline means for working people everywhere

As U.S. power abroad weakens, working people are made to pay in familiar ways: lower wages, longer hours, higher rents, heavier policing, and more war aimed at securing resources that once flowed automatically.

The same system that sends special forces into Caracas squeezes wages, evicts tenants, militarizes police, and criminalizes migration. The operation was sold as targeting drug cartels, but its real aim — control of Venezuelan oil — benefits corporations, not working people who still pay the same inflated prices at the pump.

These are not separate problems. They reflect a system losing its grip and relying more heavily on force.

The use of force is meant to settle the question of control. Instead, it exposes the struggle for what it is: a declining empire seizing by violence what it can no longer secure through production — against governments that refuse to submit. #

Gaza's 'ceasefire' exposes why Zionism must be defeated

By Lev Koufax

Gaza, Nov. 25 – A Palestinian child walks through a flooded refugee camp in Deir al-Balah. Freezing rains have continued throughout December.

IDF strikes continue

Nearly three months into the supposed ceasefire between Nazi IDF forces and the united Palestinian resistance in Gaza, the fire has hardly ceased. Since Oct. 10, the IDF has violated the ceasefire in Gaza at least 875 times. Out of these 875 violations, 421 were airstrikes or artillery shelling.

These strikes have resulted in the deaths of more than 400 people. Injuries from the strikes number well over 1,000. Many of these strikes have targeted aid distribution stations and the Egyptian border crossing. UNRWA's facilities in the strip have also faced IDF bombardment in the period since the ceasefire.

While the attacks are not the same pace as seen between Oct. 7, 2023, and Oct. 10, 2025, they are still aimed at the oppression and genocide of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, there are no verified reports of any Hamas or other resistance group violating the ceasefire. This ceasefire is really less a pause in fighting than it is a license for slow death in Gaza.

The Western world happily tolerates constant IDF ceasefire violations yet continues to frame the resistance as terrorists and criminals.

Weather and famine plague Gaza

As if U.S. imperialist-backed occupation wasn't bad enough, the weather has battered the Gaza Strip constantly over the past several months. Rain and wind have pelted the strip, leading to severe flooding. Hundreds of tents washed away as the rain pounded Gaza.

To be clear, the weather is not the real cause of this suffering. Intense cold, rain, and wind are proving fatal to the Palestinians in Gaza because the U.S. and the IDF destroyed most of the livable structures.

Further, the flood waters coursing through Gaza are full of debris from Zionist bombing. Between the leveled apartment complexes and the debris-filled water, the Zionist occupation has managed to plunge Gaza further into hell.

All of this, during a ceasefire.

Mossad escalates against West Bank

Gaza is not alone in being the focus of U.S. imperialist and Zionist genocidal aspirations.

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New Orleans marches for Palestine at start of Mardi Gras

By Gregory E. Williams

Activists march for a free Palestine in front of the Joan of Arc parade.
SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

New Orleans, Jan. 6 – Marchers under the banner of "New Orleans for a Free Palestine" filled the street ahead of the Joan of Arc parade, the first of the Mardi Gras season. With a brass band among them – NOLA Musicians for Palestine – they chanted "Gaza, Gaza, you will rise, Palestine will never die!" bringing the message of liberation to thousands gathered in the French Quarter.

The pre-Joan of Arc march is now a three-year tradition. They have marched every year since the current U.S.-Israeli genocide began following the Al-Aqsa Flood operation on Oct. 7, 2023, but is not the only such intervention in Carnival festivities.

For example, a Palestinian-led parade krewe – the Krewe of Chickpea – has also paraded in recent years on Lundi Gras, the day before Mardi Gras Day. (Lundi Gras falls on Feb. 16 this year.) Krewe of Chickpea takes inspiration both from New Orleans traditions (e.g., the Krewe of Red Beans that also marches on Lundi Gras) as well as Palestinian music and the pre-colonial spring festival of Mawsim in Palestine.

In a display of internationalist solidarity, Krewe of Chickpea parades with Krewe of Las Frijolitas (little beans), a Dominican-led krewe. They honor figures like Mamá Tingó, a farm worker and activist who fought for rural farming communities in the Dominican Republic starting in the early 1970s. They have also honored the Venezuelan environmental activist Tortugita, who was shot and killed by Georgia State troopers in 2023 during the Stop Cop City struggle in Atlanta.

Now and historically, Mardi Gras is suffused with the spirit of resistance in majority-Black New Orleans. It is more than the tourism-money bonanza promoted by state and city leaders. Raising the banner of resistance – for Palestine, for Latin America, for Black and working-class New Orleans – is especially urgent this year. The genocide in Gaza grinds on while our city is occupied by ICE and the National Guard. These things are connected. The same people are behind it. #

From the Monroe Doctrine to Caracas

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eroding dollar hegemony, and the loss of economic leverage that once made direct military conquest unnecessary. When sanctions fail, when financial coercion loses its grip, when trade pressure no longer secures compliance — military force becomes the only card left to play. This is not expansion from strength. This is violence from weakness.

Gaza

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The situation in the West Bank has worsened with every month since the events of Oct. 7, 2023.

The last two plus years have seen a significant intensification of the IDF police state that rules the West Bank from Tulkarem to Nablus to Ramallah. Video footage showing IDF soldiers shooting children, raiding homes, and even throwing Palestinians off buildings has continually circulated.

The assault on human rights and Palestinian life in the West Bank has only escalated since the supposed ceasefire. Cities like Beit She'an, Jenin, Hebron and many others have faced daily raids from IDF soldiers and armed settler militias.

Raids have included the murder of dozens of Palestinians and the indefinite arrest without due process of hundreds. Zionist occupation and apartheid in the West Bank is as much a heinous crime as the genocide in Gaza.

U.S.-backed Zionist settlers and troops have no right to any role in determining Palestine's future, whether it's in Gaza or the West Bank or occupied Palestinian land within the "48" borders.

Don't forget Palestine

Ending the escalation of genocide that began on Oct. 7 is simply not enough. Palestine will only achieve justice when every inch of Palestinian land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea is free from U.S. imperialism and Zionist rule.

U.S. progressives cannot rest on their laurels simply because the pace of the genocide has marginally slowed. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to expose the crimes of the U.S. military industrial complex and the Zionist regime in their destabilization of the entire Middle East.

Struggle cannot stop until Palestine is 100% free. The political line for the working class and the entire anti-imperialist movement has to be the return of all Israeli-occupied land to the people of Palestine. Existing in any form, Israel will continue to carry out its reason for existence: to terrorize and destabilize the region on behalf of the U.S.

Lev Koufax is an anti-Zionist Jewish activist.

Lenin's analysis: the scramble for the world

The late 1890s, which saw the imperialist war with Spain, was the exact period that led scholars and Marxists at the time to begin using the term "imperialism." Eventually, Vladimir Lenin crystallized the Marxist analysis of imperialism in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," defining the relationships between the principal economic features of imperialism.

In "Imperialism," Lenin described the mad rush of Western imperialist powers to divide the world to export capital and exploit cheap labor markets and natural resources. Between 1884 and 1900, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal carved up over 10 million square miles of territory, home to nearly 150 million people. As Lenin wrote: "The scramble for colonies by all the capitalist states at the end of the nineteenth century and particularly since the 1880s is a commonly known fact in the history of diplomacy and of foreign policy."

The U.S. imperialist war with Spain was a crucial part of this "scramble" that Lenin analyzes. As seen in the events at the end of the war, the U.S.'s motive was to catch up with Britain, France, Germany, and others in the scramble to divide the world. It is this period that the ruling class seeks to recreate through escalating provocations against China, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, and other targets, with Trump acting as its political standard-bearer.

When the Spanish departed Cuba in 1898, it was U.S. troops, not the Cuban people, who took control of the island. The U.S. military occupation lasted until 1902. Even when the U.S. troops left, their withdrawal was contingent on Cuba accepting treaties from the U.S. government that restricted Cuba's right to act independently and kept the door open for future U.S. intervention. The United States maintained its informal but iron grip over Cuba until the 1959 socialist revolution.

The 20th century further demonstrated without a doubt that the United States wanted Cuba to be completely subservient to the U.S. capitalist agenda. In 1961, the CIA backed an attempted fascist takeover of the island known as the Bay of Pigs. In 1962, the U.S. military brought the world to the brink of nuclear war through an illegal blockade of Cuba that has lasted until this day. Between 1960 and 1965, the CIA attempted to assassinate Fidel Castro hundreds of times.

2025: Manufactured outrage

The United States has held, informally or formally, all of the territory it captured from Spain in the 1898 imperialist war – including Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The war against Spain wasn't about democracy or independence for colonized nations – the same way war against Venezuela isn't about drugs or human rights. Both of these wars were about reshaping and dividing the world economically to benefit the U.S. ruling class better.

In 1898, the United States faced a massive economic crisis dating back to the Panic of 1893. During the panic, over 15,000 businesses went bankrupt. The country experienced widespread bank failure and a 19% national unemployment rate. The U.S. financial oligarchy was in a panic and in need of new markets to exploit for profit. Waging war against Spain provided the perfect opportunity to create colonial relationships with Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Fast forward to 2025. The U.S. imperialist class confronts not the opportunity for expansion, but the reality of irreversible decline. Capital has fled to cheaper labor markets. Productive dominance has evaporated. Dollar hegemony weakens as rival powers build alternative systems. The economic tools that once made overt military conquest unnecessary — sanctions, IMF structural adjustment, trade pressure — are losing their effectiveness. What remains is naked military force: the last, desperate instrument of an empire that can no longer dominate through economic means alone.

Allegations of "narco terrorism" ring as hollow as William McKinley's proclamation of Cuban independence on behalf of ultra-wealthy industrialists. Both the current war on Venezuela and the imperialist war with Spain in 1898 were escalations to overt colonial aggression in response to economic contraction.

Organizing to smash the state machine

Countries of the world and the U.S. working class must be prepared to struggle against this escalation and against imperialism as a system at its very core. There will be no inherent withering away of U.S. imperialism, as can be seen in its violent and desperate attempt to reassert control across the globe. Right now, Venezuela is the main target of that ire. However, there is always a new market to conquer or competition to eliminate. U.S. imperialism will not stop unless the working class of the world stops it.

This escalation shows that imperialist war is not a deviation but the regular operation of the capitalist state when its dominance is threatened. As Lenin told us in "State and Revolution," the working class has no choice but to "crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a more democratic state machine." This prescription for the bourgeois state and social order is more relevant than ever as the U.S. ruling class, using its state apparatus, seeks to reassert itself across the planet. #

While Trump spoke of peace, the CIA escalated war against Russia

By Gary Wilson

While the Trump administration spoke publicly of peace talks, the CIA escalated a covert war on Russia's oil infrastructure with the president's approval.

A recent New York Times report documents this dual track, detailing how covert attacks continued even as public diplomacy gestured toward negotiations. The contradiction reflects divisions within the U.S. ruling class over how to keep wars going without provoking opposition at home.

What follows draws in part on New York Times reporting.

Two wars, one state

Within the administration, rival groupings clashed over Ukraine policy, not over whether U.S. imperialist interests should be defended, but over how. One current, associated with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, argued that the Ukraine war was bleeding U.S. military stockpiles needed for a larger confrontation with China. From this standpoint, Ukraine was a secondary theater draining resources from the main strategic priority.

Another current, represented by figures such as Gen. Jack Keane and Gen. Keith Kellogg, insisted that failure in Ukraine would signal a dangerous retreat. For them, NATO expansion eastward and the subordination of Russia were central to maintaining U.S. dominance in Europe. Failure on that front would expose the limits of U.S. power after decades of expansion.

Hegseth acted on his assessment. Military aid to Ukraine was repeatedly frozen, including critical artillery shipments. Senior officers described what amounted to a de facto suspension of Pentagon support. Those within the military who favored continued backing for Ukraine found themselves sidelined.

This paralysis did not restrain U.S. war policy. It merely shifted where decisions were made.

The Agency steps in

As the Pentagon stalled, the CIA moved forward. Under Director John Ratcliffe, the agency's operations in Ukraine continued uninterrupted and, in some cases, expanded. Funding increased even as official military aid was frozen. When Trump briefly ordered a cutoff in intelligence sharing, the armed forces complied. The CIA did not. After Ratcliffe warned of the risks to agency operations, the White House quietly authorized continued intelligence flows.

Working in tandem with select military elements, the CIA intensified a campaign of drone strikes on Russian oil refineries and tankers. These operations were not conducted through Ukraine's regular armed forces. They were carried out through Ukraine's intelligence services, which relied heavily on networks of far-right and openly fascist paramilitaries.

Smoke rises from the Unecha oil pumping station in Russia's Bryansk region after a fire on Aug. 21, 2025, amid a campaign of drone strikes on Russian oil facilities.

At the center of this effort was the Russian Volunteer Corps, led by Denis Kapustin, a neo-Nazi organizer with long-standing ties to transnational fascist circles. That the CIA chose such forces was not an aberration. Imperialism has long promoted and relied on mercenary forces.

Trump approved the campaign privately. According to U.S. officials, he viewed covert escalation as a way to strike Russia while avoiding the political risks of open confrontation. Deniability was not an accident; it was the method.

Targeting the weak points

By early summer, CIA and military planners refined the campaign. Rather than symbolic attacks on easily repaired facilities, the focus narrowed to specific refinery components that were difficult to replace. The aim was not spectacle but sustained covert disruption.

The U.S. role remained indirect. Intelligence and targeting assistance were provided, but weapons and equipment were not. The attacks themselves were carried out by fascist paramilitaries, made effective by U.S. intelligence support.

The campaign later expanded to include Russia's so-called shadow fleet — oil tankers operating outside the sanctions blockade in the Black Sea and Mediterranean.

Measuring the damage

U.S. intelligence estimates claimed the strikes were costing Russia up to $75 million per day. Officials spoke of gas lines and economic strain. One senior figure declared, "We found something that is working."

Independent assessments told a different story. Analysts noted that even the highest estimates represented a small fraction of Russia's annual oil and gas revenue. Reported shortages were linked to temporary logistical disruptions, not structural damage. Russia retained refining capacity well beyond domestic needs.

This divergence is not incidental. Intelligence estimates under imperialism are not neutral measurements; they are tools used to justify policy. In this case, inflated figures helped sell the program to a president looking for leverage. The damage was real, but it was manageable. Russia's capacity to fight was not broken.

What the contradictions reveal

Publicly, the administration pressured Ukraine to accept territorial concessions in negotiations that bore little relation to the realities on the ground. Russia's position was explicit: demilitarization, denazification, and the removal of NATO infrastructure. These demands are considered by Moscow to be nonnegotiable. Russian forces now control the Donbass, which was incorporated into Russia's constitutional framework in 2022. (See "Why Russia recognized the Donbass republics.")

Washington's proposals ignored these facts. There was no negotiating space on terms that would require Russia to surrender territory it already holds militarily and claims politically.

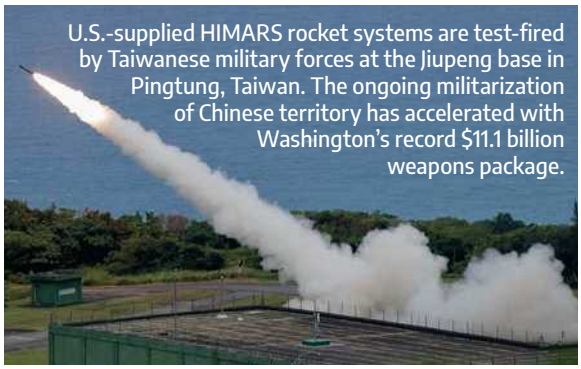
Alongside this public track ran a covert one: economic warfare aimed at raising the costs of continued resistance.

This was not confusion. It was the expression of real divisions within the U.S. ruling class over how to allocate shrinking resources in defense of global dominance. One faction sought to conserve military capacity for Asia. The other refused to accept limits in Europe, fearing that failure to subordinate Russia would expose the weakening grip of U.S. imperialism after decades of expansion.

The CIA's role was not an exception but a confirmation of how imperialism operates in periods of decline. When open policy stalls and consensus fractures, the most unaccountable arms of the state move to the foreground. Covert war becomes the preferred instrument precisely because it bypasses public debate, conceals failure, and allows imperialist violence to continue without political reckoning. #

Washington bets $11 billion on Taiwan war

By Gary Wilson



U.S.-supplied HIMARS rocket systems are test-fired by Taiwanese military forces at the Jiupeng base in Pingtung, Taiwan. The ongoing militarization of Chinese territory has accelerated with Washington's record $11.1 billion weapons package.

Washington has taken another step toward war with China. By approving the largest weapons package ever sent to Taiwan—$11.1 billion in advanced arms—the United States has intensified a long-standing campaign to militarize Chinese territory.

There is no unresolved sovereignty question in the Taiwan Strait. That question was settled in 1949 with the victory of the Chinese Revolution. What remains is the refusal of U.S. imperialism to accept that outcome.

When the People's Republic of China was proclaimed, the Kuomintang regime fled to Taiwan under the protection of U.S. military power. That retreat did not create a second China. It created a temporary imperialist foothold on Chinese territory. Every development since then has flowed from that fact.

Restraint, not provocation

For more than seven decades, Beijing has acted with restraint. It asserted sovereignty while avoiding a direct military confrontation that would have given Washington a pretext for open intervention. That restraint was not weakness. It was a conscious political choice shaped by China's assessment of the global balance of forces. It preserved peace in the Taiwan Strait even as Washington continued to arm, finance, and politically shelter the remnants of a defeated counterrevolution.

The so-called one-China policy did not rest on goodwill or compromise. It rested on the reality that the Chinese Revolution could not be reversed without war on a scale Washington was unwilling to fight. That restraint is now being stripped away.

From ambiguity to open militarization

The recent U.S. decision to approve more than $11 billion in weapons for Taiwan marks a qualitative change. The package centers on long-range strike systems designed for offensive operations, not local defense.

It includes dozens of HIMARS launchers and hundreds of precision-guided missiles capable of striking targets far beyond Taiwan's coastline. ATACMS missiles supplied under the deal have ranges of roughly 185 miles, with newer variants reaching more than 300 miles. At the narrowest point, Taiwan lies just about 80 miles from the Chinese mainland.

Weapons stationed on the island would therefore be able to reach deep into China from the moment they are deployed. Their function is not to shield civilian life, but to fold Taiwan into U.S. war planning as a launch platform for sustained strikes against the mainland—a calculated provocation, not a defensive measure.

This shift did not emerge from misunderstanding or diplomatic drift. It reflects the deeper crisis of imperialism itself. As U.S. economic dominance erodes, military pressure becomes a substitute for lost leverage. Imperialism, unable to coexist with an independent socialist state that has developed its productive forces, turns to encirclement and militarization.

Taiwan is central to this strategy not because of concern for its people, but because of its location and its role in global production. The island is being treated as a fixed platform, a stationary arsenal placed directly on China's doorstep. The danger to the population arises from this transformation, not from China's insistence on sovereignty.

A striking feature of the current escalation is its recklessness. Many of the weapons announced will not arrive for years. Yet the provocation is immediate. Imperialism is willing to heighten confrontation today over capabilities that may not materialize until the next decade. This is not strategic foresight. It is the impatience of a system confronting its own limits as economic dominance gives way to military pressure.

Inside Taiwan, this external pressure has distorted political life. Alignment with Washington is presented as security, while the social costs are shifted onto working people. Increased military spending means fewer resources for housing, wages, and social services. The island's legislature has repeatedly blocked funding for the arms package, revealing resistance within Taiwan's legislature to increased military spending.

Who is creating the danger

China's response has been firm but measured. Military exercises conducted by the People's Liberation Army are not acts of adventurism. They are signals aimed at preventing the permanent militarization of Chinese territory. They are responses to interference, not its source.

This distinction is crucial. Imperialist commentary seeks to portray escalation as a symmetrical process, as if both sides were equally responsible for rising tensions. That framing serves to obscure the real line of motion. The initiative lies with Washington. Beijing's actions are shaped by the need to block a threat, not to manufacture one.

The question before the world is not whether China will abandon restraint, but whether imperialism will continue to dismantle the conditions that made restraint possible. Peace in the Taiwan Strait was preserved for decades not by arms races, but by the recognition — however grudging — that China's revolution could not be undone.

There is no progressive outcome in turning Taiwan into a battlefield. Working people gain nothing from being put at risk to preserve U.S. military dominance in East Asia. The drive toward confrontation serves only those whose power depends on dominance, not production; coercion, not cooperation.

Imperialism presents its actions as defense. In reality, it is attempting to reopen a historical question that has already been settled. The danger lies not in China's unity, but in the effort to prevent it.

Ending the crisis requires ending the interference that created it. Until that happens, imperialism will continue to gamble with the lives of millions in an effort to preserve a world order that no longer corresponds to material reality. #

Puerto Ricans condemn militarization

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soldiers will be involved in the exercise. Quoting him, he added: "The public is going to see that we're going to have a lot of military trucks and our machinery across the island, and we're going to be on the highways."

Both Kilómetro Cero and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), organizations that defend the rights of the people, have expressed their opposition. The ACLU says, "There is no justification whatsoever for a military presence in civilian spaces, from main roadways to plazas and any other public space."

Grassroots organizations have called for a mass demonstration in front of the U.S. Muñiz Base on Jan. 17. Meanwhile, each has issued statements in support of Bolivarian Venezuela, condemning the crime of the Trump administration. #

Trump threatens war on Iran as U.S. economic stranglehold tightens

By Gary Wilson

Iranians rally against U.S. threats in January, rejecting Trump's offer to 'rescue' protesters.
Photo: TheCradle.co

On Jan. 2, Donald Trump posted a threat on Truth Social that should alarm anyone paying attention. "If Iran shots [sic] and violently kills peaceful protesters, which is their custom, the United States of America will come to their rescue. We are locked and loaded and ready to go."

Read that again. The president of the United States just promised to invade Iran if its government kills protesters – something U.S. state forces have done many times from the Civil Rights movement to police and National Guard killings at Jackson State and Kent State in 1970 to the 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings.

This isn't empty bluster.

Last June, while U.S. and Iranian diplomats were still talking, U.S. and Israeli warplanes launched coordinated strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities in a 12-day assault. The United States deployed B-2 bombers to strike the underground sites at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan with bunker-buster bombs specifically designed to penetrate the fortified facilities.

The conflict killed over 1,000 people in Iran and injured thousands more, most of them civilians, according to Iran's Health Ministry. In December, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said Iran "didn't get the full message."

Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met at Mar-a-Lago that month to coordinate the next strike. Trump told reporters afterward that he could "knock out their missiles very quickly" and that the consequences for Iran would be "maybe more powerful than the last time."

So when Trump says "locked and loaded," he means it. The question is why.

The economic vise

The protests Trump claims to care about started in early December when shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar went on strike. The Iranian currency, the rial, had hit a record low against the dollar. Prices for basic goods were soaring. The strike spread. People took to the streets, furious about the cost of living.

This didn't happen by accident. For decades, the United States has waged economic war against Iran through sanctions that target its oil exports, its banks, its shipping industry. In late 2025, Washington reimposed United Nations "snapback" sanctions, tightening the noose further. Economist Jeffrey Sachs calls this "economic strangulation" — a form of collective punishment aimed at an entire population.

The numbers tell the story. According to the International Monetary Fund's projections from October, Iran's economy is expected to grow just 0.6% in 2025, down from 3.1% the year before. Inflation is forecast at 42.4%. The rial has collapsed, wiping out people's savings and their ability to buy food, medicine, fuel. Then came the June airstrikes, which caused billions of dollars in damage on top of everything else.

So yes, Iranians are protesting. They're angry. Many blame their own government for corruption and mismanagement, and they have every right to. But the crisis itself — the currency collapse, the runaway inflation, the shortages — was engineered in Washington. The sanctions are designed to create exactly this kind of desperation, to turn people against their government, to make the country ungovernable.

Trump's offer to "rescue" Iranian protesters is a sick joke. The U.S. created the economic disaster that drove them into the streets. Now it wants to use their suffering as a pretext for war.

The response from inside

Here's what makes this moment different from past U.S. threats: Iranians aren't playing along.

After the June airstrikes, something unexpected happened. People who had been protesting the government rallied against the foreign attack. In January, massive counter-protests erupted in Fars and Hamedan provinces. Demonstrators chanted "Death to America" and condemned what they called the "destructive actions" of rioters. The message was clear: We have grievances with our government, but we won't let you use them to destroy our country.

The most striking example came from death row. Pakhshan Azizi is a Kurdish social worker sentenced to death by the Iranian government. The U.S. State Department made her case a cause célèbre, holding her up as proof of Iran's brutality.

From her cell, Azizi smuggled out a statement rejecting what she called "American sinister instrumentalization of her case." She wrote: "If the United States government truly believes in the principles of human rights and humanity, it must first cease its warmongering, aggression, and crimes in the region. It must also end its explicit support for the Zionist regime, which has committed genocide against the people of Gaza."

A woman facing execution told the U.S. government she doesn't want its help. That tells you everything about how Iranians see this offer of "rescue."

Iran's government, for its part, has responded with defiance. The Foreign Ministry called Trump's threat a "gross violation of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter" and "incitement to violence." Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf warned that any U.S. attack would make "all American centers and forces across the entire region" legitimate targets. President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran is in a "full-fledged war with America, Israel, and Europe."

What this is really about

The official story is that the U.S. opposes Iran because of its nuclear program, its support for regional militias, its human rights record. These are pretexts. The real issue is that Iran refuses to be controlled.

Since the 1979 revolution, when Iranians faced the Shah's bullets to overthrow a dictator installed by CIA coup, Iran has refused to return to its former status as a U.S. client state. It trades with countries the U.S. wants isolated. It supports movements the U.S. wants crushed. Most importantly, it sits at the crossroads of two major projects that threaten U.S. dominance: China's Belt and Road Initiative, which would create a land route from China to Europe through Iran, bypassing U.S.-controlled sea lanes, and Russia's International North-South Transport Corridor, which would connect Russia to India via the Caspian Sea and Iran, giving Russia access to the Indian Ocean.

Both projects depend on a sovereign, stable Iran. That's what the U.S. cannot allow.

The conflict with Iran is fundamentally about preventing countries from building economic and political systems outside U.S. control. Any nation that seeks real sovereignty — the ability to trade with whom it chooses, build the infrastructure it needs, control its own re-

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Iran

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sources — becomes a threat to Washington's dominance. General Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security advisor, said the quiet part out loud when he admitted the ultimate goal of a war on Iran is to "weaken China" and ensure "U.S. global dominance."

The preferred outcome is regime change — installing a government in Tehran that will take orders from Washington the way the Shah did before 1979. Analyst Behrooz Ghamari Tabrizi describes the goal as forcing Iran back into being a "client state" that "lacks the authority to challenge American regional influence."

But if that proves impossible, the fallback is a failed state. Think Syria or Libya: a country torn apart by civil war, no longer capable of challenging anyone. U.S. planners have discussed this option since the 1970s, when internal documents floated the idea of breaking Iran "into ethnic parts" to neutralize it as a regional power.

This is what's at stake. Not preventing nuclear weapons or protecting protesters. Control. The U.S. empire requires that Iran remain weak, divided, and compliant. An Iran trading freely with China and Russia, helping to build new infrastructure and new financial systems outside U.S. control, aligned with other countries resisting Washington's dominance — that is the real threat.

Where we stand

Trump's threat is reckless and dangerous, but it's also a sign of weakness. The U.S. has been trying to break Iran for more than 40 years through coups, sanctions, assassinations, cyberattacks, proxy wars. Iran is still standing. Its alliances with China and Russia are deepening. New trade routes, financial systems, and economic partnerships are being built despite U.S. opposition.

The danger is that Washington, facing the limits of its power, will lash out. The June airstrikes killed a thousand people. Another attack could kill many more. A ground invasion — which Trump's threat implies — would be catastrophic.

The lie is transparent. This has nothing to do with human rights or democracy. It's about empire, oil, and a desperate attempt to maintain dominance over countries building economic ties outside Washington's control.

When workers in Tehran go on strike because they can't afford food, the answer isn't U.S. bombs. The sanctions strangling their economy come from Washington. The military threats hanging over their heads come from Washington. The same forces of capital and empire that exploit workers in Iran exploit workers everywhere. The fight against imperialist war abroad and the fight for justice at home are one fight. #

BURKINA FASO

Coup attempt against Traoré defeated

President Ibrahim Traoré spoke before a packed stadium in Burkina Faso on Jan. 2, a day before an attempted coup, citing advances by the revolutionary government, including food self-sufficiency in 2025.

By Colby Byrd

On Jan. 3, while the fascist pigs in Washington brutalized the Venezuelan people, Burkina Faso was shaken by an attempted coup backed by the fascist pigs in Paris.

This marks a new addition to the long list of attempts by the West, notably France, to crush the revolutionary government of Captain Ibrahim Traoré and return the Land of Upright People to an existence of bondage and slavery.

African news outlets and Burkinabè officials have linked the plot to networks connected to France and to former president Paul-Henri Damiba, who was removed in 2022 amid growing popular anger at his government's alignment with Paris. These reports place the attempted coup within a longer pattern of French intervention in the Sahel, where Paris has repeatedly sought to maintain political and military control over former colonies, often under the banner of "security cooperation."

Reporting available in the hours after the attempt indicates that the plot began to unravel almost as soon as it was launched. Burkinabè security forces intercepted communications, identified key participants, and moved quickly to neutralize the threat. The military under the command of Oumar Yabré responded quickly and decisively to protect Traoré and, most importantly, the revolution.

By the early hours of Jan. 3, large numbers of people poured into the streets of Ouagadougou. Crowds gathered near the presidential residence and other key sites, holding vigils and rallies throughout the day and night. These mobilizations were both an expression of popular support for Captain Traoré and a warning to the enemies of the revolution and the Burkinabè people.

According to information released by Burkinabè authorities and reported by regional outlets, documents recovered from the plotters outlined plans to assassinate revolutionary leaders and sabotage infrastructure established to confront Western-backed armed groups operating in the country. The coup plans also reportedly called for the occupation or destruction of major state institutions in the capital.

Had it succeeded, the coup would have dismantled the gains made since Captain Traoré came to power and reopened the door to direct foreign control over Burkina Faso's resources, particularly its gold sector.

When faced with this fight to protect the revolution and Ibrahim Traoré, the Burkinabè people have repeatedly risen to do whatever it takes to defend their gains and their right to control their own fate. #

Boricuas repudian militarización e intervencionismo gringo

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Este nuevo año promete ser uno de lucha incesante en esta colonia. Más que nunca, debemos afinar nuestras estrategias para que la independencia deje de ser un sueño, una aspiración, y la convirtamos en el eje central de todas nuestras batallas, desde la lucha ambiental hasta el rechazo a las privatizaciones y a la militarización.

Sobre todo, contra la militarización, porque desde el pasado mes de agosto el ejército yanqui ha ido reorganizando, actualizando y expandiendo sus antiguas bases para ponerlas al servicio de nuevas aventuras militares desde nuestro patio. Incluso ha alquilado aeropuertos civiles, como el de Aguadilla, al noroeste, y partes del aeropuerto civil de Mercedita, en la ciudad de Ponce, al sur de la isla. El ejército, además, restringe el espacio aéreo a su conveniencia, dejando a centenares de viajeros esperando en aeropuertos.

El 3 de enero, mientras nuestro pueblo se divertía en las festividades navideñas, el terrorismo estadounidense utilizaba nuestro suelo y nuestras aguas como plataforma para invadir a nuestra hermana Venezuela y secuestrar al presidente Nicolás Maduro y a su esposa, Cilia Flores. Bombardearon instalaciones militares y civiles, matando a venezolanos y venezolanas y a 32 héroes cubanos que defendían al presidente.

Un manifestante durante una protesta frente a la Base de la Guardia Nacional Aérea Muñiz, en Carolina, Puerto Rico, el 7 de septiembre de 2025, en oposición al uso colonial del archipiélago como plataforma de operaciones militares imperialistas de Estados Unidos en el Caribe

No contentos con este crimen, el imperio gringo amenaza a todos los países del Caribe que representan una amenaza a sus intereses capitalistas: a Cuba, a Colombia, incluso a México. Y nos utiliza como pieza clave de sus incursiones militares.

Hace pocos días, el Ejército gringo anunció que todo el territorio de nuestro archipiélago será escenario de sus prácticas y presencia militar. Estas maniobras, denominadas "Semana del Ejército en el Caribe", utilizarán sitios públicos, desde calles y avenidas hasta plazas públicas y, desde luego, sus bases. El teniente coronel Heath Dickinson, director de operaciones del Comando de la Reserva del Ejército de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, dijo a los noticieros que miles de soldados estarán involucrados en este ejercicio. Y, citándolo, añadió: "El público va a ver que vamos a tener muchos camiones militares y nuestra maquinaria por la isla, y vamos a estar por las carreteras".

Tanto Kilómetro Cero como la Unión Americana de Libertades Civiles (ACLU, por sus siglas en inglés), organizaciones que defienden los derechos del pueblo, han manifestado su oposición. Dice la ACLU que "no existe razón alguna que justifique la presencia militar en espacios civiles, desde las vías principales hasta las plazas y cualquier otro espacio público".

Las organizaciones de base han convocado a una manifestación masiva frente a la Base gringa Muñiz para el próximo 17 de enero. Mientras tanto, cada una ha publicado declaraciones en apoyo a Venezuela bolivariana, repudiando el crimen de la administración Trump.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.

Puerto Ricans condemn militarization and U.S. interventionism

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

This new year promises to be one of relentless struggle in this colony. More than ever, we must sharpen our strategies so that independence ceases to be a dream or an aspiration and becomes the central axis of all our battles — from the environmental struggle to the fight against privatization and militarization.

Above all, against militarization. Since last August, the Yankee military has been reorganizing, upgrading and expanding its old bases to put them at the service of new military adventures launched from our own backyard. It has even leased civilian airports, such as Aguadilla in the northwest and parts of the Mercedita civilian airport in the city of Ponce, in the south of the island. The military also restricts airspace at its convenience, leaving hundreds of travelers stranded at airports.

On Jan. 3, while our people were enjoying the holiday festivities, U.S. terrorism used our land and waters as a platform to invade our sister nation Venezuela and kidnap President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. They bombed military and civilian installations, killing Venezuelan men and women and 32 Cuban heroes who were defending the president.

Not content with this crime, the U.S. empire threatens all Caribbean countries that pose a challenge to its capitalist interests — Cuba, Colombia, even Mexico — and uses us as a key piece in its military incursions.

A few days ago, the U.S. Army announced that the entire territory of our archipelago will be the stage for its military exercises and presence. These maneuvers, called "Caribbean Army Week," will use public spaces — from streets and avenues to public plazas — as well as, of course, its bases. Lt. Col. Heath Dickinson, director of operations for the U.S. Army Reserve Command of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, told news outlets that thousands of

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